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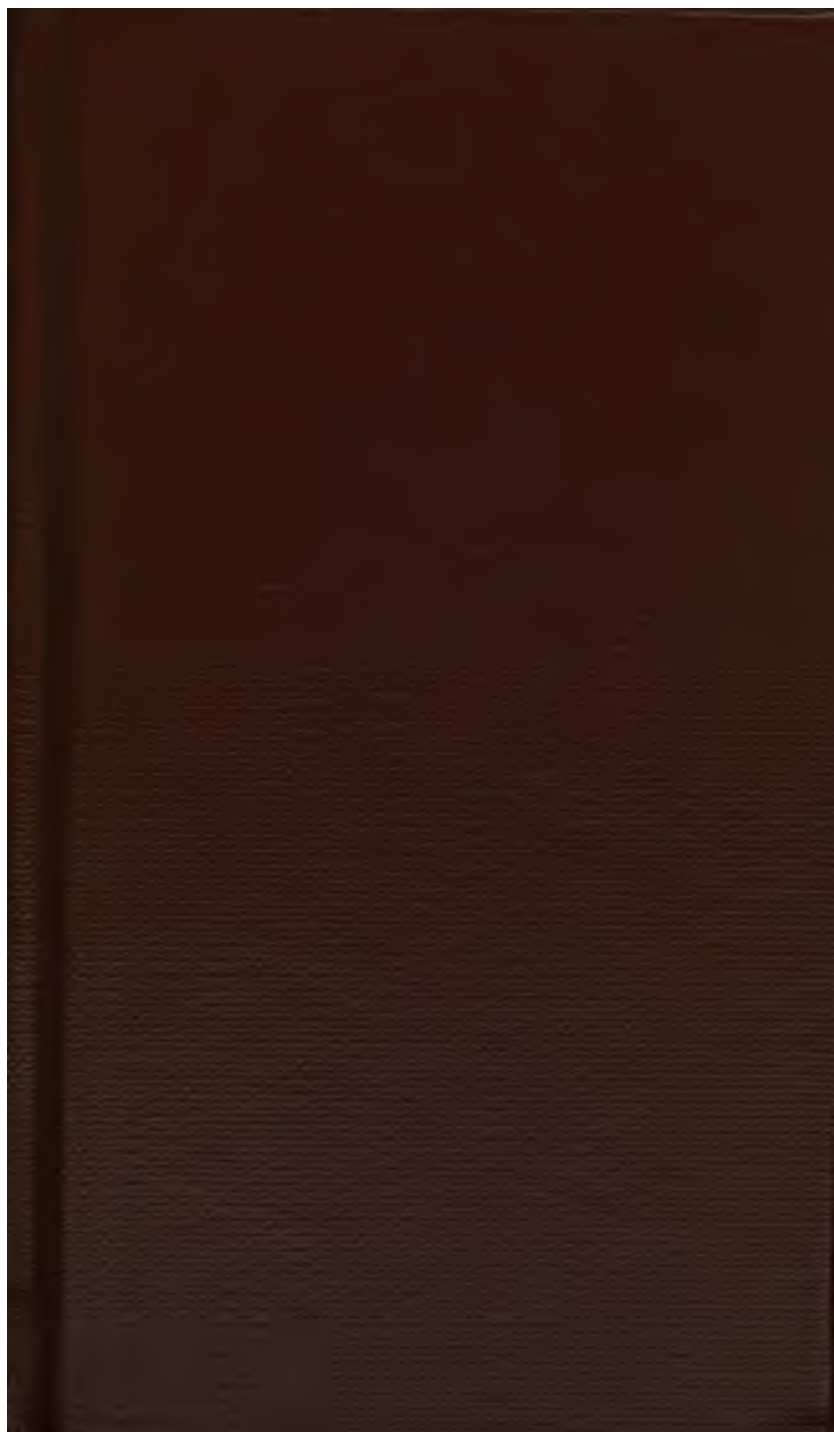
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*H. Harris.*

1871

# **UNITARIAN TRACTS.**

**IN NINE VOLUMES.**

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**VOL. IV.**

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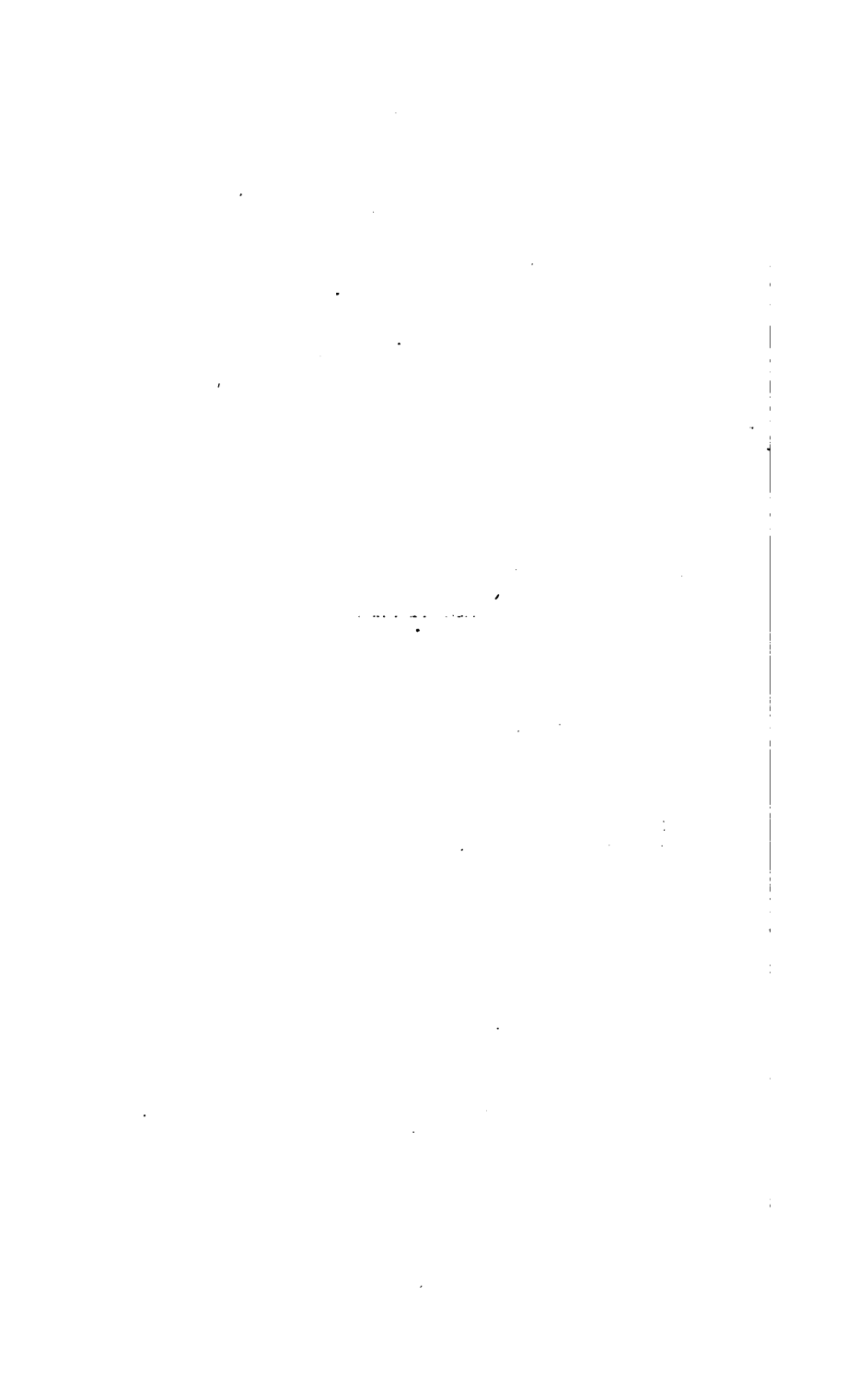
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**FOSTER on Fundamentals in Religion.**

**HINCKS on the Importance of Truth.**

**LARDNER on the Logos.**

———— **Two Schemes of the Trinity, &c.**



*Recd I. Lous  
June 1858  
(1)*

**AN ESSAY**

ON

**FUNDAMENTALS IN RELIGION,**

By **JAMES FOSTER, D.D.**

*First printed A.D. 1720.*

TO WHICH ARE ADDED

EXTRACTS FROM THE INTRODUCTION TO  
"THE SCRIPTURE DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY,"

By **SAMUEL CLARKE, D.D.,**

Rector of St. James's, Westminster.

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## PREFACE

BY THE EDITOR.

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**T**HE celebrated Author of the following Essay was born at Exeter on the 16th of September 1697. When five years old, he was sent to the Grammar School of his native city; and from this school, in due time, he was removed to the Academy for Students in the Ministry kept by the Rev. Joseph Hallet the elder, under whose superintendence he completed his academical studies. In the year 1718, when he was twenty years and a half old, he entered upon public life by beginning to preach; but having embraced that form of Christian doctrine which had been recently advocated by Whiston and Clarke, Clergymen of the Established Church, he did not immediately receive a call to a situation among the Dissenters. He soon after, however, removed to a small congregation at Milbourn Port in Somersetshire; but finding this situation unsuitable, he found a friendly asylum and

calm retreat at the house of the Rev. Nicholas Billingsley, at Ashwick, under the Mendip Hills. In this retreat, Mr. Foster pursued his studies with close attention, and preached to two country congregations near Wells, which together did not raise him more than the yearly salary of £15. "His chief view," as one who knew him has attested, "was to maintain his own integrity, and promote the honour of his great Lord; bearing difficulties with rational firmness, and calm submission to the Divine Will." From Ashwick, he removed to a small Presbyterian congregation at Trowbridge in Wiltshire, where, however, his means of subsistence were so inadequate, that he had some intention of quitting the Ministry, and learning the trade of a glover from a Mr. Norman, with whom he boarded\*. At this juncture, however, a change took place in his opinions respecting baptism, partly in consequence of reading the controversy between Wall and Gale, in which he thought the latter, who was the advocate of *believers'* baptism, had the advantage: he accordingly submitted to this ordinance at Barbican, London,

\* "His refusing to *starve*, was no indication of his want of cheerfulness; and his choosing rather to have learnt the trade of Mr. Norman, than seek for succour in the establishment, is an early instance of his steadiness in the principles of Nonconformity, of which he gave later testimonies in declining the large offer made him by Dr. Rundall, Bishop of Derry."—*Note to the "Sermon preached at Pinners' Hall, on occasion of the death of the late Rev. James Foster, D.D., by Caleb Fleming."*

where Gale was an occasional preacher, though not, as some of Foster's biographers have intimated, the settled minister. It was in the year 1724 that Foster accepted of an invitation to be co-pastor of this Society with the Rev. Joseph Burroughs. His acceptance of this office is dated 26th April in that year, as appears from the Church book, (beginning May 22nd 1695,) at present in my possession, as Minister of Worship Street Chapel. This appointment led to all our Author's subsequent fame. It was while in this connexion that he published his answer to Tindal, viz. A.D. 1731, an octavo volume, which is among the most celebrated of his works. It was applauded by all parties, went through several editions, and Tindal himself was accustomed to speak of this Defence of Christianity with great respect\*. In the year 1728, while still Pastor of the Barbican Baptist Church, he was invited to deliver courses of Sunday Evening Lectures at the Old Jewry Chapel, where the celebrated Dr. Chandler was one of the Ministers. *He* had himself delivered Lectures in the same place, which were afterwards published. These Lectures were continued by Mr. Foster, to crowded audiences, during the winter season for more than twenty years. These discourses called forth the com-

\* The title is, "The Usefulness, Truth and Excellency of the Christian Revelation," &c., of which the third edition, octavo, was published in the year 1734.

mentation of the poet of Twickenham, in his well-known couplet,—

Let modest Foster, if he will, excel  
Ten Metropolitans in preaching well.

Pope had quoted to Bolingbroke, and the latter recites with commendation a passage found in one of Foster's printed Sermons; "Where mystery begins, religion ends."

Subsequently, our Author accepted an invitation to take charge of the Independent Church at Pinners' Hall, succeeding Dr. Hunt, the friend of Lardner, and preached his first Sermon there January 6th 1745. In the following year, he was called to an office which proved a severe trial of his sensibility, and which is thought to have been a remote cause of his death. It was the request of the Earl of Kilmarnock, who had been implicated in the rebellion of the preceding year, that he should administer to him consolation in the closing scene of his life, and even attend him on the scaffold. An account of his conversations with this unfortunate Nobleman was afterwards published by him, which though it displeased the fanatics of that day, may be expected to give satisfaction to all who make use of reason in matters of Religion. From that time Foster's vivacity and health declined, though he continued to preach till January 5th 1752. He died on the 5th November in the following year. He never discovered any uneasiness on account of his theo-

logical principles, "but to the last spoke with great dissatisfaction of the narrow and confined schemes of the divine mercy\*."

Foster was the author of four volumes of excellent Sermons, chiefly practical, which may be read with great advantage at the present day; and of two volumes, in quarto, of "Discourses on all the principal Branches of Natural Religion and Social Virtue," 1749—1752. The list of subscribers to this work, to the number of two thousand, enumerated at the beginning of the second volume, has probably no equal for extent and respectability, affixed to any work of "Dissenting Divinity." He engaged in controversy with Stebbing, on the subject of Heresy, and also wrote some of the Essays in the "Old Whig." The University of Aberdeen, in the most flattering manner, conferred upon him, in the year 1748, the degree of Doctor in Divinity.

The Tract now reprinted, published by our Author A.D. 1720, was edited by the Rev. Charles Bulkley in 1750. It is now given to the English public after an interval of eighty-five years, and is believed to be adapted to remove the false impressions still remaining in the minds of some Trinitarian Dissenters, in relation to the origin of Unitarianism in England, and the conduct to be pursued towards its advocates. To the Essay, are added

\* Dr. Caleb Fleming.

some valuable Extracts from the Introduction to the celebrated "Scripture Doctrine of the Trinity," by Dr. Samuel Clarke, which it is conceived will be found to harmonize well with the sentiments of Dr. Foster, since this Work of Dr. Clarke, in conjunction with others of the honest Whiston, greatly contributed to produce the circumstances in which Foster was in early life placed. These Extracts are taken from the third edition of "The Scripture Doctrine," published in the year 1732, which edition, we are told by the Editor, "contained several alterations and additions which were left by the Author ready for the press, and which are exactly printed from his copy."

B. MARDON.

London, February, 1835.

AN ESSAY

ON

FUNDAMENTALS IN RELIGION.

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WHOEVER considers the excellence and perfection of the Christian law, its suitableness to the present circumstances of mankind, and what a direct tendency the observation of it has to promote the true dignity and highest happiness of the human nature, must needs be concerned to see the design of it in so great a measure defeated by bigotry and party zeal. It cannot but be matter of lamentation to such a one, to see those admirable rules of justice and charity which our holy religion lays down to be observed by its professors, and which are of everlasting, unchangeable obligation, as being founded on the necessary nature and relations of things, infringed and violated by unreasonable heats, fierce contentions, and quarrels about the doctrines of it, which are no further useful than as



they have a tendency to influence men to, and direct them in, the discharge of their natural duty to God and one another. And that this has been the consequence of the present debates about the Holy Trinity, is but too visible. Now as this has risen, in a great degree, from men's thinking their particular explication of this doctrine a fundamental of Christianity; by which they mean, that an explicit belief of it is, according to the constitution of the Christian covenant, necessary to salvation; I think nothing is so likely to allay the fury of their passions, and temperate their impetuous zeal, as convincing them that it is not of altogether so high and important a nature as they think it to be, and that a disbelief is not in itself inconsistent with any man's Christianity, nor will destroy his title to the favour of God and eternal life.

And since the Unitarians have never, as far as I can learn, made their principles, in the sense above mentioned, fundamental, and have had their duty in their present circumstances fully explained and closely pressed upon them in an excellent discourse published the last year\*; I shall have nothing to do with them in the following Essay, but only show that the Trinitarian notion is not one of the fundamentals of the Christian religion; meaning by *fundamentals*, whether the notion be just or not, those doctrines, an explicit belief of which is made, in all common and ordinary cases, indispensably neces-

\* Seasonable Advices relating to the present Debates about the Holy Trinity, addressed to both contending Parties.

sary in order to men's obtaining that happiness which is promised in the Christian covenant. I say, *in all common and ordinary cases*, because, if any man be necessarily and invincibly ignorant of any doctrine of this nature, by being denied the liberty of examining, himself, the original records of our religion, or for want of instruction from others; this must be an exception from the general law, unless we suppose the Almighty to be such a tyrannical and arbitrary being, as to punish his creatures merely for not knowing what it was not in their power to know, for ignorance which was involuntary and unavoidable. And as a discourse of this nature has such a visible tendency to check the growth of uncharitableness and schism, it can, I suppose, need no apology with any one who considers the present great decay of Christian charity; and yet what a high rank it holds among Christian graces, and how prejudicial, divisions, and the forming of distinct parties and factions, must be to the Christian society. For as, in a political society, where that strict and close combination which there ought to be between the members of it in order to the joint pursuit of one common interest, is lost, and many distinct, independent, or contrary interests are set up, it must, in the natural and necessary course of things, weaken the body, because the good of the whole will be disregarded, every one prosecuting the narrow and contracted interest of that party to which he belongs; so, though divisions among the subjects of Christ's kingdom

shall not utterly overturn it or entirely dissolve his government, because having wisdom and power enough he can superintend all the affairs of it as he pleases, and has promised so to overrule and moderate things that his church shall continue till the end of time ; yet must they needs be very injurious to the Christian cause, as the common and general interests of it will be, if not quite overlooked, not regarded as they ought, nor as much as the peculiarities of a private sect.

Before I enter upon my main argument, I shall prove these two preliminary propositions relating to Fundamentals in general:—

1. That no doctrine is a FUNDAMENTAL, a necessary article of a Christian's faith, but what is so *plainly and distinctly revealed*, as that an ordinary Christian, sincere in his inquiries, cannot miss of the knowledge of it :

2. That it is not sufficient that a proposition be clearly revealed, to make it a fundamental, but a *belief of it must also be made an express term of happiness in the sacred writings.*

1. No doctrine is a Fundamental, but *what is so plainly and distinctly revealed*, as that an ordinary Christian, sincere in his inquiries, cannot miss of the knowledge of it. This may be argued from the perfections of God, and the relations he stands in to mankind. For certainly their kind Creator and Preserver cannot but delight in, and sincerely desire their happiness ; and therefore it is not to be doubted but that he has done everything to pro-

mote it which is consistent with his illustrious excellence and perfection, and with the wisdom of his government over free creatures. He cannot have fixed it upon such infinite uncertainties, as that they may fail of obtaining it after the most sincere and diligent use of all the means they are capable of using, but must have made it certainly and infallibly attainable by every one who seeks it in the integrity of his heart. What can induce us to think the most good-natured Being in the universe to be such a hard master? Has there been any want of goodness in his dispensations towards mankind, which might tempt us to entertain such unworthy and injurious thoughts of him? Again, can he who has been at such amazing expense to redeem the human race from that destruction which their sins had merited, and to raise our nature to its highest perfection of excellence and happiness; who, that he might be just to his being and attributes, and yet justify and save us, delivered up his Son to death for us all,—can he, I say, have left it so absolutely precarious, whether poor illiterate men, who are far the greatest part of the world, to whom especially the Gospel was preached, and consequently to whose capacities it ought to have been peculiarly adapted, shall, doing their best, be happy or miserable? How, then, can the grand end of the life, death, resurrection and the Gospel of his Son be answered? Or, finally, has he ever been found false to his word, or failed of the accomplishment of his promises, that his most solemn and sacred decla-

rations of his willingness that all men should be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth, should be looked upon as insincere; and he be represented as having promised happiness to the greatest part of mankind, if not upon absolutely impossible conditions, upon conditions next to impossible?

Further, upon the supposition that a common, unlearned Christian, by the use of his natural faculties, and an ordinary degree of sincerity, after having offered up unfeigned and hearty prayers to God for the gift of his Holy Spirit to illuminate his mind, to clear it of all mists and fumes of prejudice and passion, and to enable him to distinguish between error and truth; I say, upon the supposition that such a one may yet miss of the truths, which he cannot be saved without the knowledge of, what becomes of the extraordinary and super-eminent grace of the Christian institution? What advantage, upon this state of the case, hath the Christian above the Jew? Or rather, are not the advantages of Judaism superior to those of Christianity? The *necessary* doctrines under that dispensation were few, plain, and intelligible; and though they were forced to submit to a cumbersome load of rites and ceremonies, and to many other uneasy, positive institutions, yet these they had a clear and distinct knowledge of, were not perplexed with nice and subtile disputations about what was commanded, but were certain what God would accept and reward; whereas, upon this scheme of things, a

clear head and a penetrating judgement are almost absolutely necessary to salvation under the Christian economy; and men of low, simple apprehensions are in a manner consigned over to damnation. In this view, the yoke which Moses laid on the necks of the Jews was light, though they groaned under it, and were scarce able to bear it, in comparison of Christ's yoke, which is intolerable.

The promise of eternal, inconceivable glory and happiness annexed to the Christian law, makes the case but very little better. For what does such a promise signify to such as are not capable of performing the conditions upon which it is suspended? But when a hell of so much horror and aggravation of torment is threatened upon a non-performance of these conditions, who is there almost but would esteem Christianity a curse, rather than a blessing; a token of God's vengeance and displeasure, rather than of his mercy and tender compassion? And, I believe, had the Apostles told the world at the first publication of our religion, that a right notion of some of its doctrines was necessary in order to their obtaining the reward it promised, and avoiding the penalty it threatened; which yet they might fall short of, after all the care and diligence, pains and industry, and the closest application of mind they could possibly use, or, which is the same thing, could have vacation for using from the necessary business and indispensable concerns of human life, they would have been very backward to part with their ancient Judaism, or Paganism, for such

a dangerous scheme of religion. And perhaps the Jews, from the discoveries which God himself had made to them of his being and attributes, and the Gentiles, from those notices of them which might be gathered from the common and ordinary occurrences of his providence, would think it an imposture which could never be of divine institution; since the Supreme Being, who had ever given abundant manifestations of his tender regard to his creatures, could never have filled the way to their happiness with such insuperable difficulties; but must have promised it upon terms which were in some measure consistent with the natural poverty of their understandings and emptiness of their minds, and with the little leisure and small advantages they had for cultivating and improving them, by reason of the necessity they were under of minding the affairs of life.

But further, how is it possible for us to fulfill these precepts, "Make your calling and election sure \*;" "Rejoice in the hope of the glory of God†;" if there are not some certain and infallible grounds for us to proceed upon in judging of the state of our souls, and our meetness for glory? But now, if the justness of our ideas, and the correctness of our thoughts about disputable opinions, and texts of Scripture which admit of various interpretations, for each of which somewhat plausible and puzzling may be offered, will be a measure of divine proceedings at the day of judge-

\* 2 Pet. i. 10.

† Rom. v. 2.

ment; how is it so much as possible for the generality of mankind to entertain any certain persuasion, or the least comfortable hope of their future happiness? Nay, how is it possible for the most learned, sagacious, and inquisitive persons to do it, since the wisest of us in this state of darkness and imperfection, know but in part, think but very confusedly, and are liable to be imposed upon by fallacious and sophistical reasonings? This thought must depress our spirits, prevent our ever obtaining that sprightly joy and triumph which necessarily flows from an expectation of the incomparable heavenly felicity; and cast a mist before the glorious prospect. The soul, if this were the case, would be ever in a trembling condition; and in the last and most important article of life—good God! what fluctuation would there be between hope and fear! what agonies of spirit! what an irreconcilable aversion to death! I believe the most warm and zealous advocates for any particular doctrine, upon grave and sedate reflection, cool and temperate thinking, would not for the world have just notions about it to be absolutely necessary to salvation, whatever they may say in the transports of their zeal, but would have sincerity, serious, impartial, and humble examination, to be the only measure and rule of judgement.

2. It is not sufficient that a doctrine be clearly revealed, to make it a Fundamental; but an *explicit belief of it must be made an express term of happiness* in the sacred writings. For, without doubt, there



are a great many clear propositions which many sincere, honest Christians have no explicit belief of; nor is it necessary they should, since they are purely incidental and occasional, and either do not at all affect Christianity in any important points of doctrine or practice, or, if they are of consequence, it is only as they serve to illustrate the essential fundamental parts of it, which yet may be believed, though they are never observed or attended to. I grant, indeed, that whenever a Christian *sees* them to be *clearly revealed*, he is obliged to believe them. But then it is not because the points of doctrine are in themselves so important, as that men's salvation or damnation will be determined absolutely by their knowledge or ignorance of them; but because they are, as he thinks, in the Word of God, who is omniscient, and so cannot be deceived himself, just and faithful, and so cannot impose upon his creatures; and there is still this difference between any of these propositions, and those which are, in the sense above mentioned, fundamental,—that a man may be saved without an explicit and particular belief of these; whereas the others are indispensably necessary to be explicitly believed, as being the essential constitutive parts of the new covenant.

And now methinks it should be past dispute, not only that Christ alone, as sole king of his church, has a right to settle upon what terms those who are willing to become his subjects must expect to be protected and rewarded by him, but that these

terms are expressly determined, and particularly that our Lord, out of his gracious and kind concern for his church, "which he hath purchased with his own blood \*," hath fully and clearly revealed what those truths are, which are of such vast importance as that the happiness of immortal souls depends upon an explicit belief of them, and which therefore it so nearly concerns all the members of it to be apprized of. So that we may rest satisfied that whenever this is not *expressly* said, with relation to any particular doctrine of Christianity, misapprehensions of that part of the revelation which contains it, if we have examined it with sincerity, will never be brought into the account against us at the day of judgement; but if we can be charged with nothing else, we shall be able to lift up our heads with joy and confidence, in that solemn and awful day of trial, and shall be found "perfect and entire," in a Gospel sense "wanting nothing."

Here, then, is a straight and easy way to true solid peace; a rational foundation of comfort, which does not cramp a free, inquisitive genius in its searches after truth. For I am persuaded, did men only consider what kind of faith that is which Christ and the Gospel make necessary, and not pay so much deference to the decisions and determinations of perhaps weak and deluded, or of artful designing men, whose interest is to keep their minds in fetters, and to hold their rational faculties in chains in the most abject and ignominious servi-

\* Acts xx. 28.

tude; the truths of the Gospel would not be lost for want of being looked into and examined; men would not be affrighted from seeing with their own eyes what is real unadulterated Christianity, and what are only the dreams of fanciful and bewildered enthusiasts, for fear of falling into heresy; but primitive Christianity would probably revive, and it is likely there would be a greater uniformity in judgement and opinion than there is at present; for Christianity, abstracted from the colouring and varnish which have been laid upon it, and separated from school divinity, one of the worst enemies it ever had, and by which it has been horribly perplexed and rendered involved and intricate, is a plain, intelligible religion. But if this were not obtained, there would be more of charity and mutual forbearance, and less of that turbulent, schismatical, imposing, tyrannical spirit, which has reflected so much dishonour upon the Christian cause, and made it the sport and derision of infidels.

I would draw this general conclusion from the premises, *That no Christian who has the liberty of looking into his Bible, and uses that liberty, can err in Fundamentals.* I take it for granted that such a one believes the being of a God, and a future state of rewards and punishments, (which I think are not fundamental articles of Christianity properly so called, but general maxims, upon which all religion, natural or revealed, is built,) for this is implied in his professing to be of any religion. And now, how is it possible for any honest man who reads his

Bible to miss of the knowledge of any essential part of Christian doctrine, when whatever doctrine is of this nature is clearly, and distinctly, and intelligibly revealed? Nay, how is it possible that any man, honest or dishonest, should mistake here, when all such necessary doctrines are made express conditions of salvation in the sacred writings, which he is supposed to be conversant with? It is possible, indeed, that men may be induced by some vicious lust, and to serve ill designs, to deny such grand truths, which is certainly a destructive and damnable error. But then the reason why such persons are heirs of damnation and wrath, is not an error in judgement, or the imperfection and deficiency of their faith, but it is because their wills are depraved and vicious. And, by the way, since it is plain that no *Christian who uses his Bible* can avoid knowing what doctrines are essential, and indispensably necessary parts of Christian faith, I think it fairly and naturally follows that no doctrines can be, as the word has been explained, fundamental, about which *Christians using their Bibles* are disagreed and divided into parties; and consequently, that none of those points which are at present debated by great numbers on all sides in the Protestant world, are of such vast and infinite consequence. To mention particulars, not the doctrines of the Trinity, original sin, absolute election, perseverance, and the like; for if any of these are necessary and fundamental doctrines, since doctrines of this sort cannot but be known to all Christians who

read the New Testament, (as being not only clearly revealed, but therein made in express words absolutely necessary to be believed,) we must suppose one of the contending parties to profess and maintain, to promote their temporal interests or serve some base designs, not only what they do not believe, but what they know to be false; which is a supposition so gross and shocking, so contrary to all the principles of natural justice and charity and to the probabilities of things, that it would be a reflection upon the Christianity and common sense of a civilized people to attempt to expose it.

And now, having stated the notion of a fundamental doctrine, and given the characters of it, I shall examine by the two general rules which I have laid down, whether the Trinitarian scheme be a Fundamental, or not.

1. Then, let us see whether this proposition, viz. *The Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, are the one GOD*, be so clearly and plainly revealed, as that no sincere man, serious in his inquiries, can miss of the knowledge of it: And it cannot be so much as pretended that the *proposition itself is plainly delivered* in Scripture. If it be, let the place or places be produced, and I will engage the world shall own themselves obliged for the discovery. It is only said to be a *plain consequence* of what the Scriptures assert concerning God, and concerning the Sacred Three, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Now this is quite another thing from its being clearly, and distinctly, and expressly re-

vealed; for it may be a clear consequence to *one person* from what the holy Scripture says, though another cannot see it; men having different educations, capacities, and ways of thinking. And, therefore, to make it equivalent to a clear and express revelation, it must be a necessary and unavoidable consequence of what the Scripture asserts; a consequence which every sincere and serious searcher after truth cannot help discerning. But this is not the case, because there are multitudes who declare that upon the most strict and impartial search they are capable of making they not only cannot see this to be a Scripture consequence, but discern the contrary to be plainly and evidently such, and, more than so, to be asserted, as they think, in direct terms in Revelation.

But you will say, perhaps, that they are influenced by some criminal depravity of mind, by pride, passion, or an affectation of novelty. This is constantly, by bigots and enthusiasts, by those who are in the wrong, as well as those who are in the right, set against the solemn and repeated declarations of their opponents to the contrary, and therefore ought only to be regarded as an effect of heat and forwardness of temper, or an overweening fondness for their own particular sentiments. It ever supposes a latent claim of infallibility, and is in plain English exactly the same with saying, We are absolutely certain that we are in the right, and therefore all who differ from us are partial, and prejudiced, and under the influence of some wrong bias or other,

else they would think and judge as we do. For, if men were firmly persuaded of the truth of that grand principle of the Protestant religion,—a principle that is founded on the very make and constitution of human nature,—*that they are weak, short-sighted creatures, liable to error*, they would never boast of absolute certainty in doubtful cases, or determine positively that the truth of a question lies on their side, when they are opposed by a great number of men of at least equal sense and learning, and in all other cases allowed of equal integrity.

Are you absolutely certain that the consequence you would draw from disputable passages of Scripture is just and natural, and that no other plausible and seemingly consistent sense can be fixed upon them? You cannot say you are, because you are fallible and may be mistaken; and if you are liable to error, is it not as possible that others may be in the right, in denying the consequence to be true and rational, as you are in affirming it? So that all the mighty noise which has been made about your explication of the doctrine of the Trinity's being as plain and evident as that the sun is up at noon-day, so that no one can fail of seeing as you do, who is not injured by some vicious prejudice, comes to this; it is not delivered in express terms in Scripture, but you think it *naturally follows* from what the Scripture asserts, though, as you are fallible beings, you cannot be absolutely certain that your conclusion is just, or that education, prepossession, and a regard

to general opinion had not a great influence upon you in forming it; and is there no difference between a real, necessary and unavoidable consequence from Scripture premises, and a conjectural consequence of your own?

But to answer the objection directly, there are many learned men who have fallen in with the Unitarians that have given as great evidence of their having done it in the sincerity of their souls, and of their not being governed by any vicious affection, as the nature of the thing will afford; and consequently your pretended Scripture consequences are not so clear and necessary, as that every honest and impartial man must discern them. They are as far as we can judge, and were always acknowledged to be so, before they published their heresy, (which it seems is of force enough to alter the natures of men and things,) men of inviolable righteousness and truth, and of unspotted integrity; and consequently it is but reasonable to suppose that they were serious in examining what was the mind and will of their great Lord and Master, were sincerely desirous to come to the knowledge of the truth, and were swayed and governed by no other considerations besides that of approving themselves to their King and Judge. It is but a piece of natural justice to suppose this of every good man, who makes it his chief end to recommend himself to God, and secure his favour, who knows of what vast importance and absolute necessity a regular course of honesty and sincerity is, and that all the truths of



God have some way or other a tendency to promote his happiness.

Moreover, the notions they now entertain are contrary to those principles in the belief of which they were educated, and in whose favour they were so long prepossessed; which it is likely they did not renounce until they had examined the matter thoroughly over and over, with the utmost strictness and nicety, and not at last without some kind of fear and trembling, or at least suspicion and distrust. I believe we all find, all I mean who have any serious concern for their souls, that we are very cautious how we part with those doctrines which we have been taught to hold sacred, as being momentous parts of the Christian Revelation. We are naturally apt to be very much startled, if we hear but the truth of them called in question; and instead of being forward to entertain contrary principles, we are rather too shy and reserved, backward to receive conviction, and fancy that all that is offered against us is consistent enough with our set of thoughts, and very reconcileable to them, though there are insuperable difficulties in it.

We may see clearly how much human nature is governed by prejudice and prepossession, in the Jewish nation. They expected that the Messiah would appear in the fullness of earthly splendour and glory, with the pomp and majesty of an universal, temporal monarch, to break the yoke of their enemies, and make the Gentiles their slaves and tributaries; and to compose this glorious scene,

had joined together all the gaudy images of human greatness; and therefore, when our Lord appeared in the form of a servant, in a mean and humble state, which was a bar to their ambitious and aspiring thoughts and aims, the generality of them despised and rejected him, and vilified him as an impostor. "Is not this the carpenter's son?" seemed to have been the general cry. "Is not his mother's name Mary?" &c. How, then, can "this fellow," who is of such a low and obscure original, be the King and Saviour of Israel? And can it be imagined that any sober, religious Trinitarians could be less prejudiced against that scheme, which must, as their thoughts then ran, derogate so infinitely from the glory of the blessed and adorable Jesus? It cannot be thought they would be induced to think favourably of it, much less to entertain it, till they had maturely and deliberately weighed and considered things, made the narrowest scrutiny into the merits of the cause, and had joined with these sincere endeavours, solemn and repeated addresses to the God of light and knowledge, for instruction and information. If we add to this, that in altering their sentiments, and making a public profession of it, they could have no prospect of advantage, but were sure of incurring the popular odium, of being treated as singular, enthusiastical persons, and perhaps as damnable heretics and miserable apostates; we shall be forced to own that nothing but the seeming plainness of the evidence, sense of duty, and a strict regard to conscience, made them

believe, or declare their belief of such obnoxious, detested opinions. A prospect of disgrace and infamy is very shocking and terrible to human nature, and they had too much good sense not to foresee this consequence, and therefore, we may be sure would never have run themselves upon it willingly, not till they saw it was unavoidable, without "making shipwreck of faith and a good conscience."

These are the very arguments which are used promiscuously by Christians of all denominations, to prove that the Apostles of our Lord were sincere in their accounts of his resurrection; that it was not love of novelty, or a desire to be famous, and raise themselves a name, which made them attest it; but only a real and hearty conviction of it, namely, that they were sincere, honest men; and so would not endeavour to impose upon the world, or relate anything which they were not sure of. That they could not be supposed forward to embrace the Christian religion, because it was contrary to their preconceived opinions, as well as to the rest of their countrymen. And finally, they had no prospect of getting anything by spreading such a false report amongst the people, but were almost sure to meet with poverty, contempt, and death itself; and therefore, being men of calm thought, as appears by the excellent discourses of morality which they wrote, they would never have exposed themselves to such dreadful inconveniences, and to certain ruin, if they had not been

convinced of the truth of what they delivered to the world, after the most careful and diligent inquiry, and of the necessity they were under of acting as they did, to avoid the divine displeasure. This has been urged with great advantage against Deists, who ever have been, and ever will be pinched by it ; since all arguing against it is arguing against the make and frame of human nature, the reason and passions of mankind\*. And I think the argument holds equally strong with relation to many of the most learned amongst the present Unitarians. And there can nothing, I believe, be urged from the nature of things to vindicate the Apostles from a charge of pride, self-conceit, affectation of novelty, an ambitious desire of fame, which may not in like manner be made use of to vindicate and clear them. If this way of reasoning be good and just, apply it indifferently and without partiality to the case of every one to whom it may be applied ; to the Unitarians in their turn, as well as to the Apostles and first preachers of Christianity. But if it be not just, there is an end of one great bulwark of Christianity, one important proof of the truth and divinity of our holy religion.      \*

And if men of learning, who have given the utmost evidence of their being sincere and impartial, cannot see this consequence, it must be more than possible that men of inferior capacities should miss seeing it ; and consequently it cannot be a funda-

\*. Refer to my Sermon preached at Trowbridge.

mental, since I have shown before that all fundamental articles of faith are so clearly and distinctly revealed, as that honest men of the lowest degree of understanding cannot fail of the knowledge of them. Upon the supposition of the falsehood of the Unitarian doctrine, it cannot, I think, with any modesty be denied, but that in what the patrons of it offer against the orthodox exposition of texts of Scripture, and in favour of their own opinion, there is somewhat plausible, and such puzzling difficulties as persons of an ordinary capacity cannot solve; because the solution of them depends upon criticism, and understanding in some measure the original languages, and the different acceptation of words and phrases, which such are no competent judges of. So that it is an easy matter for one who believes the subordination of the Son and Spirit to the Father, and is a perfect master of his scheme, to seduce them from the truth, or at least unsettle and unbinge their minds. And if it should so happen, it would be very rash and censorious to ascribe it to a vicious temper, or to say that they had not a sincere love of truth, were not serious and diligent, according to their capacity and leisure, in their searches after it, and earnest and importunate with God to direct and lead them into it.

But, further, let us see of what particular texts this proposition, *The Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost are the one God*, can be supposed to be an undeniable consequence. Is it a consequence of those texts which speak of the Father as the only true

God, the alone supreme and self-existent being \*? The Unitarians will tell us that the contrary, namely, that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, are not the one supreme God, seems to be a necessary consequence from these; because if the Father, that is, the first person of the Trinity, only be true God in the highest sense, the self-existent being, and original cause of all things; the Son and Spirit not being the Father, cannot be the one only living and true God. Or is it a consequence from the text which speaks of the Father alone as knowing the precise time of the destruction of Jerusalem †, and consequently as being alone strictly and properly omniscient? Or is the supreme deity of the Son deducible from that place which speaks of him as inferior and in subjection to the Father in his highest nature, namely, before his incarnation, and so before the existence of the human soul ‡? Or from those which *seem* to imply that it was the Logos, or divine word himself, who was abased and suffered §? Natural reason would prompt us to think the contrary, since the Supreme Being is and must be impassible, because of the necessary and immutable happiness of his nature. Or is the equality of the Holy Ghost with the Father and Son inferred from his being so often represented as *ministering to both of them*? which among men, I know is ever a mark of subordination and inferiority. I believe

\* John xvii. 3. 1 Cor. viii. 6. † Matt. xxiv. 36. ‡ Psa. xl. 8.

§ John xvii. 5. Acts xx. 28. Col. i. 14, 15. 2 Cor. viii. 9. Rev. i. 17, 18.

we must not look here for this necessary and unavoidable consequence.

Let us see, then, what other text will afford it. Particularly, whether it follows that Christ is *most high God* from what St. Paul says of him, "who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God\*." Now, it cannot be a necessary consequence from this text, because it is granted, and I think proved by many learned men who have written on this subject, that the words ought not to be rendered *thought it not robbery*, but *did not arrogate to himself, or covet to be equal with God*†. And it is disputable at least, whether it ought not to be translated *like God*, since equality is somewhat absolute; whereas the word *ἴσος*, as Mr. Emlyn observes‡, admits of degrees. Neither, I think, is there an absolute necessity of concluding it from what our Saviour says, "I and my Father are one§;" because the Unitarian exposition of these words of a unity of consent and agreement, must be allowed to bid as fair for being the true, as the Trinitarian interpretation of them, namely, of unity of nature and essence, since St. John himself has used the word in the former sense, and, more than so, has plainly determined that this is

\* Phil. ii. 6.

† See particularly Dr. Whitby on the place, and Dr. Bennet's answer to Dr. Clarke.

‡ True Narrative of the Proceedings of Dissenting Ministers at Dublin against Mr. Thomas Emlyn, page 40.

§ John x. 30.

the nature of that unity that there is between the Father and the Son \*; whereas the latter is a dark, mysterious, metaphysical interpretation, which neither the nature of things nor the analogy of Scripture makes *necessary*, nor the use of the phrase in that sense in other places of the New Testament. Or, finally, is the supreme and independent deity of Christ a consequence of these words of St. Paul, “of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever†.”? If it be a just, it cannot be so plain and unavoidable a consequence, as every honest man must see; because the title *God* is attributed to inferior beings, angels and magistrates. And the same Apostle hath asserted, that though Christ be God over all, yet it is manifest—that is, to the reason and common sense of mankind,—“that he is excepted who did put all things under him‡,” or made him God and Lord over all. I may add to this, that it is a matter of nice debate whether the words ought to be read as in our translation, or as a doxology to the Father, thus, “of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God be blessed for ever§.”

I am at a loss to think what the passages of Scripture are, from whence it will apparently and undeniably follow, beyond the possibility of a plausible exception, that the Holy Ghost is most

\* John xvii. 11.      † Rom. ix. 5.      ‡ 1 Cor. xv. 27.

§ Whoever has a mind to see what may be said for this latter reading, may consult Mr. Whiston's *Primitive Christianity*, vol. iv.



high God. And I believe I may spare the pains of looking for them, without giving much offence, since there are very few who seem over fond of entering upon that argument.

Upon the whole, it is not *expressly asserted* in Scripture, that the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, are the one supreme God; and we have seen that it is not a necessary and *unavoidable consequence from Scripture premises*, that it is not a consequence so unavoidable as that every sincere and impartial man must see it; because the Unitarians, who do not see it, many of whom are men, of unquestionable learning and judgement, have given the world as good proofs of their impartiality and integrity as can reasonably be desired; and consequently it cannot be a fundamental, since every fundamental doctrine must be so clearly revealed as to be obvious, not only to the wise and learned, but even to vulgar understandings.

I would add, before I close this head, that that proposition, *There are three somewhats, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, who are yet but one God*, seems to me impossible to be true in any sense. For whatever is, is either a being of itself, or an attribute, mode or relation of being. To say that by three somewhats are meant three attributes only, is to make three attributes to be the whole divine nature with all its attributes, which is a contradiction; and no reason can be assigned why *every* attribute of God should not be a distinct person, as well as *these three*, be they self-existence, or wisdom, or power,

or whatever else you please. To say that by three somewhats is meant only one and the same divine being, under three different relations and modes of existence, is to destroy the real existence of the Son and Spirit, and is contrary to many plain passages of Scripture, where distinct personal properties are ascribed to each of them\*. But if these three somewhats are three beings of themselves, as they must be if they are not three properties, modes or relations, they must of necessity be three distinct Gods; to assert which, is to subvert the grand foundation of revealed religion, namely, that there is but one God†.

To this it may be said, that the doctrine of the Trinity is an unintelligible, incomprehensible mystery, and that therefore it may be true though we cannot see how it can be. Be it so, yet we see from hence how it is possible for an honest man to think the proposition false and absurd; and, since all those Scriptures which are urged as proofs of it are capable of another and different interpretation, how such a one may be induced by this reasoning, be it either just or sophistical, to embrace the con-

\* Matt. xxviii. 19. John vii. 16, 17, 18; viii. 29; xii. 49, 50. Luke i. 35, &c.

† Whoever would see more upon this head, may consult the *Nature and Consequences of Enthusiasm* considered; which is a pamphlet that I dare say will be ever unanswered; and I take this opportunity of publicly thanking its honest and ingenious author for the eminent service he has done to Christianity and the Protestant cause.

trary opinions consistently with the strictest principles of sincerity.

2. Supposing the Trinitarian doctrine to be clearly revealed, it is no fundamental unless it be made an express term of happiness in the New Testament. But now this is not the case; if it were, it might be easily proved to be so by producing the passage or passages where it is expressly said that whoever believes that the *Father, Son, and Spirit is the one only living and true God, shall be saved*; and *whoever believes not this, shall be damned*; or somewhat to the same effect as full and express as this is. It is so far from it, that the contrary is plainly demonstrable from the holy Scriptures. For the evangelist Luke, in the preface to his Gospel, plainly intimates that it contains all the necessary parts of the Christian faith. "Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed amongst us, &c., it seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus, that thou mayest know the certainty of those things wherein thou hast been instructed\*." And St. Paul seems to mean this when he says, "God will judge the secrets of men according to my Gospel†." For the Gospel of St. Luke was written by the direction

\* Ch. i. 2, 3, 4.

† Rom. ii. 16.

and under the influence of this Apostle. And Eusebius mentions a tradition which they had, that St. Paul always spoke of it in this manner whenever he referred to it \*. If so, in those words he makes it the rule of judgement, and consequently supposes it to be a perfect rule. If, then, in this Gospel all things necessary to be believed are comprehended, no point of doctrine, a belief of which is not *here* made a condition of future happiness, ought to be urged by Christians as indispensably necessary in succeeding ages upon each other. But now this proposition, The Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost are the one God, is not only not declared herein to be a necessary article of Christian faith, but here is scarce anything said about the deity of the Son and Spirit; nor are *here* by far such high and exalted things spoken of them as in *other* parts of the Christian revelation.

Further, all the faith which Christ and his Apostles made necessary to salvation, when they preached to the Jews, who believed the God and Father of our Lord Jesus to be the only true God, which was also made necessary when they preached to the Gentiles†, was the *believing him to be the Son of God, the promised Messiah come in the flesh, the Saviour and King of the world*; and consequently, none besides this faith is necessary and indispensable. "Jesus said unto her," (to Martha,) "I am the resurrection and the life, &c.; whoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die: believest thou this?"

\* Ecclesiastical History, lib. 3. chap. 4.      † John xvii. 3.

She saith unto him, Yea, Lord, I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world \*." And we are told, That the great end of the miracles which our blessed Saviour wrought, was to convince the world that he was *the Son of God*, as a sure way to eternal life †. Again, "whoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God ‡." What can be more plain than this?

We may likewise observe, that the preaching of the Apostles, of which we have an account in the Acts, was designed to convince men of this one thing, that Jesus was the Messiah. This was the sum of St. Peter's first sermon, by which he converted near three thousand. "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ §." His sermon to the Jews in the third chapter was to the same purpose. And we are told at once what was the continual subject of their preaching; "And daily in the temple and in every house they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ ¶."

But here perhaps it will be objected, that though the Trinitarian notion be not made in direct terms absolutely necessary to salvation, in the sacred writings, yet it is thus necessary by *consequence*, because the contrary is a consequential denying what

\* John xi. 25, 26, 27.

† John xx. 30, 31.

‡ 1 John iv. 15.

§ Acts ii. 36.

¶ ch. v. 42.

the Scripture makes necessary to salvation. To which I answer, *that a consequential denial* of it is no denial of it all, unless a person see, and take the consequence. But how is it a consequential denial of what the Scripture makes necessary? Why thus. Upon the Unitarian principles Christ could not be the Redeemer and Saviour of the world, or a propitiatory sacrifice for the sins of men, which is the foundation of the Christian covenant, and consequently must be necessary to be believed. For, sin being of *infinite* malignity, because committed against a being of infinite and unlimited perfections, and God's justice obliging him to demand a *strict equivalent*, satisfaction could never be made by any beneath the supreme God himself. To which I answer, that the main foundations of this objection are false, which entirely destroys the force of it, namely, that *every* sin is of infinite malignity, and that God's justice obliged him to demand a strict equivalent; for if all sins are infinite, all sins are equal, unless we suppose one infinite to be greater than another; and if they are all of equal malignity, then to sin with the utmost eagerness and delight, against the strongest convictions, the highest degrees of light and knowledge, and the most forcible motives and obligations to obedience, are no aggravations of a crime, nor do they increase its guilt. Nor can we, upon this supposition, ever account for the different degrees of misery and torment in hell. Because every sin being infinitely evil, and consequently deserving misery infinite in duration,

and as great in degree as human nature is capable of suffering, the demerit of one offence can be no greater than of another ; nor can it possibly require a more intense punishment. And I very much question whether the greatest sins that have ever been committed, were not still capable of further aggravations. It is past dispute that the greatest part of those offences which mankind daily commit, are ; and consequently they cannot be of infinite malignity, because their malignity is capable of being increased and heightened.

To the other thing, namely, that God's infinite justice obliged him to demand a strict equivalent, I have this to say, That God's governing justice, considered as it relates to the dispensing rewards and punishments, has nothing at all to do in this matter. For, though it obliges him to reward all those who are obedient, as he has promised to do, since it is their indisputable and unalienable right to be thus rewarded, and what they may humbly claim consequent upon his promise ; yet, certainly, it lays him under no obligation to execute the penalty annexed to his laws, or to punish sinful men in full and rigorous proportion to the desert of their iniquities. For to whom would he be unjust if he should not act thus? Without all question, not to the sinners. And if not to *them*, none of his subjects besides have any reason to complain, because he is gracious and merciful, kind and forgiving. By God's justice then, as concerned in this affair, must be meant his justice to his being and attributes, to his essential

purity and rectitude, and his wisdom as a governor. And then it comes to all this, that God, as a holy and wise governor, who must ever be supposed forward to take the best measures to support the dignity of his crown, the honour of his government, and the happiness of his subjects, could not pardon the sins of men and receive them into favour, unless some such honourable amends were made for their breach and violation of his laws as would convince the world how much he favoured virtue and resented vice, and restrain them from presumptuous hope and confidence in his mercy, whilst they continued in the practice of sin. And therefore, whatever would answer those valuable and important ends, be it equivalent to the sufferings of all mankind as the desert of sin, or not, must be looked upon as sufficient satisfaction.

And now, what could give his creatures a clearer notion of his awful holiness and irreconcilable abhorrence of sin and vice, or cut off from them more effectually all expectations of impunity, if they continued to lead irregular lives, than his delivering up the brightness of his glory and the express image of his person, his only-begotten and well-beloved Son, to death for their transgressions? His not receiving them into favour, but upon a condition so full of dread and terror as was the inconceivable abasement, the vast and unusual sufferings of that glorious and exalted being, who, next to himself, was the most raised and supereminent person in the universe, the head of the creation, and vastly



superior to the most excellent of the angelical order? This must be a more terrible and flagrant demonstration of his inflexible and spotless purity, than could possibly be afforded upon the Trinitarian scheme; wherein a human soul, incomprehensibly inferior to the Arian Logos, is the only sufferer; the divine nature being immutably happy, and consequently not susceptible of affliction and pain. And the sufferings of the man Christ Jesus must be as far at least as those of the Logos from being a strict equivalent. Further, indeed, they could not be, for both are supposed to be but finite beings, though one much above the other, and so equally incapable of infinite suffering in degree. And therefore, upon both schemes, since the supreme God is impassible, if sufferings of this kind were strictly and indispensably *necessary*, it is impossible any satisfaction should be made, but all mankind must have perished. And finally, if *every* sin be infinitely evil, and God's justice constrained him to demand infinite satisfaction; if the Creator and his creatures could be reconciled on no other terms but these, such a reconciliation must have been impracticable upon both schemes, for this reason also, namely, because, supposing the sufferings of Christ to be of infinite worth, they would be sufficient to atone but for *one sin*; and if no more than a certain determinate number, elected from all eternity out of the mass of mankind, were to be saved, there must have been as many infinite beings to suffer as they had committed sins, which

were more than the Christian and Pagan theology together can furnish us with.

I hope by this time I have plainly proved, that upon the Unitarian principles such satisfaction might be made to God for men's transgressions of his laws and contempt of his authority, as would be honourable to his perfections, preserve and establish the reputation of his government among men, that he might as well, at least, upon their principles, as on those of the orthodox, where atonement must be made by an inferior nature, be just to his glory and excellence and the rights of his sovereignty, and the justifier of those who believe in Jesus; and consequently, that they do not destroy that fundamental article of the Christian religion, the salvation of a lost world by Jesus Christ.

It may be said further, that to worship Christ upon the Unitarian scheme is idolatry, which is a fundamental error, and therefore that the scheme itself is an error in Fundamentals. To know whether it be so, or no, it is necessary that we state the notion of idolatry. Idolatry is either giving supreme and absolute divine honours to a created and inferior being; or giving any inferior worship to him without a positive command or ordination from God. The latter as well as the former of these is idolatry; and it is only upon this state of it that we do or can charge the Papists with it, for giving subordinate religious honours to angels and departed saints. It is likewise for this reason that the Israelites worshipping a golden calf is represented as ido-

latry\*. For, though they were naturally a dull heavy people, it cannot be imagined they were so stupid and senseless, and utterly abandoned of reason, as to think that fictitious image, the work of their own hands, to be the very self-existent Jehovah, who brought them out of Egypt and had so miraculously conducted them through the Red Sea, or that they designed it for anything but a medium through which to convey their supreme adoration and respect to the ultimate object of it, the God of ISRAEL.

Now the worship which the Unitarians pay to Christ is not of the highest kind, nor, properly speaking, divine, because it is all referred ultimately to *his* God and Father. Whereas, the proper worship of the supreme God must rest and fix in himself, and cannot be referred ultimately to any other, because there is no being superior to him, and, consequently, it cannot be idolatry in that sense of the word, namely, giving supreme and absolute divine honours to a created inferior being. Nor can it be so in the latter acceptation of it, namely, giving inferior worship to such a being without a command or ordination from God, because they have both command and precedent in the holy Scriptures for that worship and religious respect which they offer to Christ. And certainly, the most high God, without any real diminution of his essential incommunicable glory, may order an inferior being to receive inferior worship, which redounds ultimately to his

\* Psa. cvi. 19, 20.

own glory, and so is an acknowledgement of his unrivalled and unparalleled excellence. And it cannot be called *giving his honour to another*, because it is no honour, but a disgrace and disparagement to him, to offer him any worship of an inferior degree, and which does not terminate in himself. Here, then, we see a plain reason why the Papists are idolators and the Unitarians are not so, namely, because the former pay religious worship to saints and angels without any command of ordination from God; the latter do not ascribe *supremely* divine honours to the Son, which would be idolatry, and have the command of the Father, whom alone they acknowledge as the one God of the universe, for giving him inferior worship.

Besides, the worship which is given to Christ by the Unitarian doctrine is no more than what his office and the relation he stands in to us would demand, and indispensably oblige us to, if we knew nothing at all of his nature; and consequently cannot be idolatry merely upon the account of his being a derived, dependent, and subordinate being. For instance, as he is our Mediator, we are bound to pray to him to intercede for us to the Father; as he is our exalted Saviour, we ought to praise him, and ascribe glory to him, provided it be *to the glory of the Father*. If we believe God hath accepted his death as a sufficient satisfaction for our breach of his laws, we cannot but trust in him for pardon and salvation, and we cannot but love him, next to the supreme God, above all other beings, who next to

him has been our best friend and highest benefactor. And I will be bold to say, that whatever be the reason of it, the worship prescribed by the Gospel is no other than can very well be offered upon Unitarian principles, it being of the Father as the *ultimate* object of it \*, *through the mediation* of the Son, in or *by* the Holy Ghost†. There is no worship paid to Christ as supreme God, none terminating ultimately in him, none but what is referred to the Father‡. And particularly the doxologies which are addressed to him are never upon the account of his independent deity, self-origination, or natural sovereignty over the creatures, but only upon the account of the unspeakable grace expressed in his humiliation and death, for the sake of mankind, and the regal authority he exercises as Mediator§.

And even where *all men* are commanded "to honour the Son, even || as they honour the Father," the foundation of it is not his necessary existence, or any original right which he had to the services of rational beings, but that power and authority he

\* John iv. 23. Eph. iii. 14.

† John xvi. 23, 24. Rom. viii. 26. Eph. ii. 18. Heb. iv. 14, 15, 16.

‡ Phil. ii. 11.

§ 2 Pet. iii. 18. Rev. i. 5; 6; v. 12, 13, 14; vii. 10; which are all the doxologies evidently and indisputably directed to Christ in the New Testament.

|| *Kathōs, as truly.* See John xvii. 11. Eph. v. 25; where the same word is used to confirm this interpretation. Mr. Leigh, in his *Critica Sacra*, says, *Kathōs est similitudinis adverbium.* It noteth an equity, and like equality; not an equality. (*In particul. Kathōs.*)

received from the Father\*. Further, the *Holy Ghost is never directly worshiped*, either by invocation, prayer, thanksgiving, or doxology, because he is always represented as Christ's minister, and never as invested with dominion, sovereignty, or regal authority.

Upon the whole matter, this proposition, *That the Father, Son, and Spirit, are the one supreme Being*, is not a fundamental of Christianity, because it is not so clearly revealed as to be obvious to every sincere serious inquirer after truth of ordinary capacity, or even to men of good sense and learning. Nor is it determined to be a doctrine of that importance (which is another necessary mark of a fundamental,) in the written records of our religion, which contain a complete system both of Christian principles and practice.

And this consideration is as strong a motive to peace and union among Christians as anything can be supposed to be, and I am sure as seasonable, when what is really and truly a fundamental of Christianity, the great law of love and charity, that peculiar precept of the Gospel in the observation of which consists so great a part of the perfection of human nature, is so transgressed and violated, under pretence of obeying another precept of it, namely, "contending earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints." What should hinder, but that they who have all the faith which is necessary to qualify them for a participation of the Christian

\* John v. 22, 23.

reward, and are sincere and constant in all the duties of a holy life, should mutually caress and embrace each other, notwithstanding any difference of sentiment about matters of lesser moment and concern, points of disputable opinion?

And particularly with reference to church communion, I cannot see any reason why the present debates about the Holy Trinity should make Christians set up altar against altar, or refuse to assemble in one place of worship and communicate with each other peaceably. Both parties believe all the necessary articles of Christian doctrine; and therefore as many amongst either of them, "as have their conversation becoming the Gospel," will be accepted by the "Judge of quick and dead," and rewarded at the "coming of the day of God," when there will be large allowances made for the weakness of our understandings and the necessary defects of our knowledge in this state of immaturity and darkness. And certainly, poor, fallible, sinful creatures ought not to be more rigorous than their omniscient and righteous Creator; but to bear with one another's unavoidable imperfections, as each expects to be borne with by his fellow Christians; and that God will not deal too strictly and severely with them at the day of recompense. Those who may, and must dwell together in one heaven, ought to own themselves of one church here upon earth. Those who acknowledge "one God," who is the Father of them all, and "the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, one hope of their calling, one Lord

and King," to whom they are in subjection, even him whom the Father "hath exalted to be a Prince;" who have "one faith" as to the essentials, and "one baptism" into the "name of the Father, the Son, and Holy Ghost," ought not to be backward to make one society, one community, or body. For it is no light matter, but what men will never be able to answer in the face of their Judge, and before the awful and holy congregation of angels and saints, to reject those as unworthy Christian communion, and upon a level with infidels, who are precious in God's sight, whom he knows to be sincere and upright in heart and life, and will at last commend and crown; or to shut those out of the church, and deny them the privileges they have a right to, as good Christians who will be admitted into heaven.

This is the very reverse of the practice of the primitive Christians. For though they, as well as we, could not but have different notions of many things, men's understandings, and consequently their apprehensions of questions which admit of debate, having ever been almost as various and different as their faces, yet they meet together in common for the worship of God \*, "being of one heart and one soul †," that is, unanimous in love and brotherly affection. And St. Paul prays that those whom he supposes of different sentiments about matters of doubtful disputation, might be of one mind, that is, agree in charity and mutual forbearance, though they could not in opinion. "Now the

\* Acts ii. 44, 46.

† ch. iv. 32.



God of patience," who bears with his creatures notwithstanding the vanity of their thoughts and the weakness of their reasonings, "grant you to be like minded\*," that is, to be of the same disposition towards one another, "according to Jesus Christ," his direction and example, "that you may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," that is, that this patient and submissive temper of mind may incline you, notwithstanding your several views of things, to join together in worshiping "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." He adds, "Wherefore receive one another" to Christian communion, using compassion towards those that are weak, as Christ has in receiving us, with all our weaknesses and follies, "to the glory of God †." And this same Apostle exhorts the Corinthians "to be of one mind and live in peace ‡," that is, not to be of the same apprehension about everything in Christianity, for that though it were desirable, yet was not in their power, and so could not be the subject of an exhortation; but, when they could not have uniformity of judgement not to let that break the peace of the church or be the occasion of divisions, and of their forming themselves into distinct parties and factions, which must needs give the world a very odd notion of the religion they professed, and prejudice the minds of those that were without against it.

\* Rom. xv. 56.

† Rom. xv. 7.

‡ 2 Cor. xiii. 13.

I am loath to say it, though it be true, that those who insist most on the orthodoxy and purity of their faith in the point now contested, are least disposed to observe these healing precepts of the Apostle, and follow those patterns of humility and peace which were set them by the Christian church in its first and purest ages. I hope the reason why they give no greater evidence of the goodness of their faith by their works, is their thinking their adversaries to be in a fundamental error, and that, therefore, as soon as they are convinced of their mistake, they will live in love with them as brethren. For what though the Unitarian notion be, according to your present thoughts, an infinite disparagement to the blessed Jesus, yours must be thought by them altogether as injurious to the honour of the Father, so that you both stand in equal need of each other's charity. And as God, knowing their hearts, and that they "love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity" and would not willingly derogate from his honour for ten thousand worlds, pities them and forgives the error of their understandings, so ought you to receive and own and honour them for the strength of their love to God and Christ, notwithstanding the weakness of their faith and the supposed malignancy of their principles. For it is very often a reasonable thing and a duty to distinguish between persons and their principles, and to esteem and love and look upon the former with pleasure, while we renounce, abhor, and tremble at the thoughts of the latter.

The case is not exactly the same with relation to communion between Christian people and their ministers. For I grant there are some errors which are not Fundamental, which will warrant their discharging them or separating from them. But then they are only such as relate to the public worship of which they are the directors and managers, and make it impossible for them to join in it without wounding their own consciences and offending God; or else such as strike at the root of practical godliness, and destroy the indispensable obligations to religion and a holy life. Of the former sort are those errors of the Papists which make them read their prayers in an unknown tongue, by which an unlearned Christian can never be edified, and frequently address themselves in their public liturgy to angels and saints, as mediators between God and us, or intercessors for us with the grand Mediator; their doctrine about the manner of celebrating the Eucharist, &c. Of the latter sort is the error of the Antinomians, that men may be united to Christ while they continue in sin\*, and that it is not necessary in order to salvation that they leave it afterwards, (though they are bound to do it in gratitude,) for it is one of their principles that nothing that was ever a member of Christ can be lost to eternity. And those errors which make no alteration in the Christian worship, and have very little, if any, influence on practice, ought, I think, to be

\* Shepherd's Sound Believer, page 321, 80, 77, &c.

borne with in a minister as well as in a private Christian ; and a separation upon account of them is a cause less justifiable, dissolving a relation which is very sacred and important. For if a separation be warranted by difference in judgement, between ministers and their people, about one such disputable point, I cannot see but it must be warranted by difference in judgement about any ; which will destroy all order and regularity, and introduce inevitable confusion into the churches of Christ, since this frequently happens, and will happen, in spite of all the methods that can be taken to prevent it.

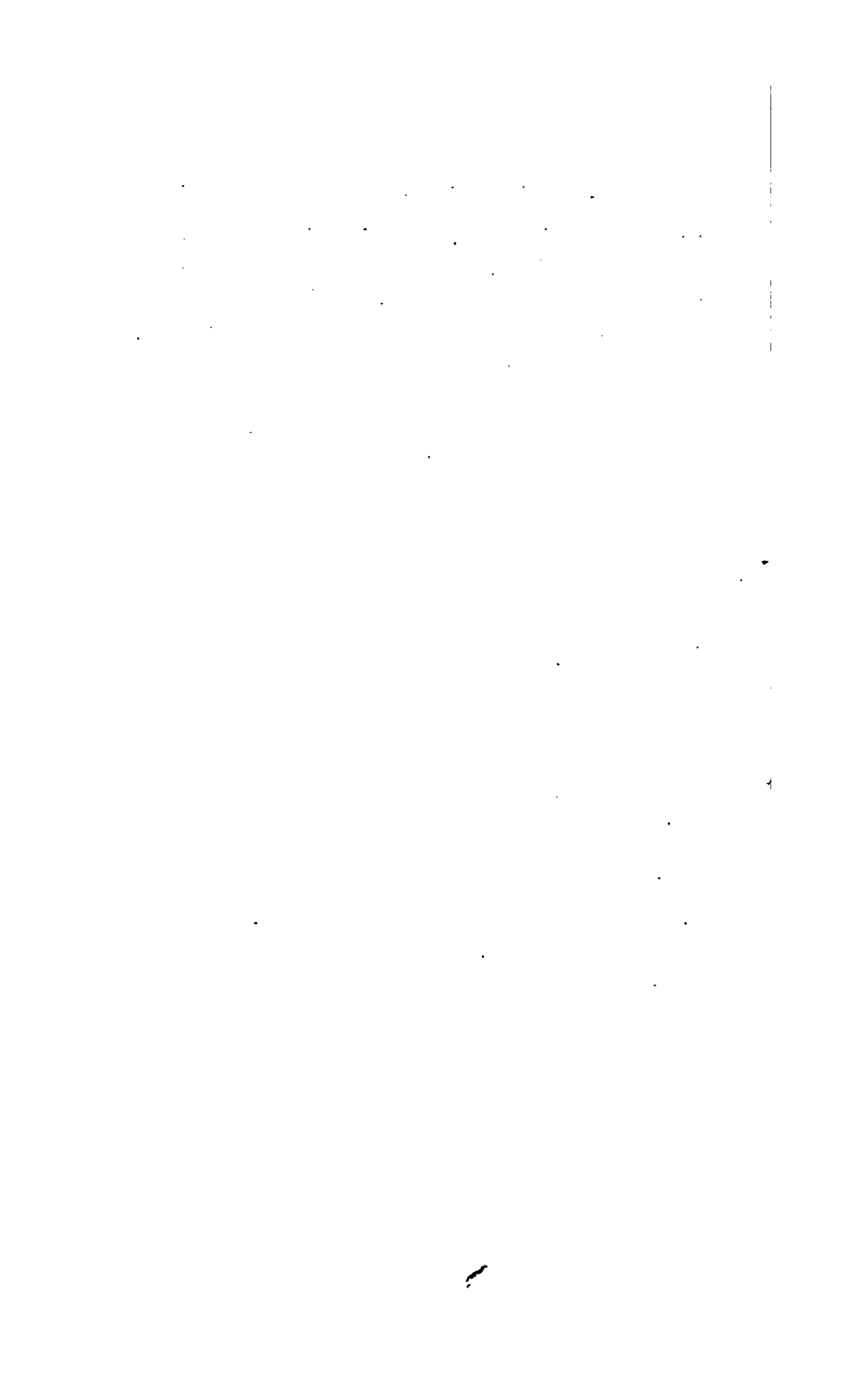
Of this latter sort I take the error of the Unitarians to be, if it be an error ; it makes no change in Gospel worship, since it is scarce disputed whether their worship be strictly and exactly scriptural, namely, of the Father ultimately through the Son, as Mediator, by the assistance of the Holy Spirit ; and it can have no ill influence upon the practice, because the Unitarians are, upon their own principles, under immense and boundless obligations to Christ, though engaged to love the Father alone supremely, and are obliged to love him incomprehensibly above this world and all its enjoyments, and even above life itself, and to serve him to the utmost of their capacity, that is, to serve him better than any man has ever yet done or ever will do. And therefore how the gentlemen at Exon [Exeter], and the seven ministers who were their directors and assistants in that blessed work, will answer for

their ejecting men of such piety, learning, and eminent usefulness, as Mr. Hallet and Mr. Peirce, to the sovereign Judge, must be left to the last and decisive day to be determined. I believe they would be put hard to it to make a good or even tolerable defence of their conduct before equal and impartial men.

And now I hope I can appeal to the allwise Searcher of hearts for the sincerity of my intentions in publishing the foregoing Essay. I call him to witness, that it is my sincere aim to restrain that licentious and malignant spirit of censure and excommunication, which has prevailed so mightily of late, and to revive decaying charity, that excellent, though neglected grace which is the distinguishing mark of a disciple of our Lord, the bond and cement of the Christian society. If I offend any, I can only say, it was far from my design, which was not to exasperate, but to edify. Let no one say, that the reason why I condemn reviling, hereticizing, and anathematizing, with relation to the present disputes, is, because all the thunder and vengeance is levelled at men of my principles. For, if I know anything of my own heart, I am disposed to censure *equally* every degree of intemperate heat in each of the contending parties. I always had, I bless God, ever since I began to understand, or think to any purpose, large and generous principles, and there never was anything either in my temper or education which might incline me to

narrowness and bigotry. And I am heartily glad of the opportunity which now offers itself of making this public, serious profession, that I value those who are of different persuasions from me more than those who agree with me in sentiment, if they are more serious, sober, and charitable.





## EXTRACTS

FROM THE

### INTRODUCTION TO DR. SAMUEL CLARKE'S "SCRIPTURE DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY."

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**AS**, in matters of speculation and philosophical inquiry, the only judge of what is right or wrong is reason and experience, so in matters either of human testimony or divine revelation, the only certain rule of truth is the testimony or the revelation itself.

The Christian Revelation is the doctrine of Christ and his Apostles; that is, the will of God made known to mankind by Christ, and by those whom Christ intrusted with infallible authority to teach it. For the right apprehending of which doctrine, men are (as in other matters of the greatest importance to them,) sincerely to make use of their best understanding; and, in order thereunto, to take in all the helps they can find, either from living instructors or ancient writers; but this, only as a means to assist and clear up their own understanding, not to overrule it; as a means to afford them light to see what Christ has taught them, not to



prejudice them with supposing that Christ has taught anything which, after the strictest inquiry and most careful examination, they cannot find to be delivered in his doctrine.

If in all things which the Gospel declares absolutely necessary to be believed and practised in order to salvation, the Revelation of Christ was not in itself so clear, as that every sincere person, using the best helps and assistances he can meet with, might sufficiently understand it, it would follow that God had not at all made sufficient provision for the salvation of men. For the doctrine of Christ and his Apostles being the only foundation we have to go upon, and no man since pretending to have had any new revelation, it is evident there can never possibly be any authority upon earth sufficient to oblige any man to receive anything as of divine revelation which it cannot make appear to that man's own understanding (sincerely studying and inquiring after the truth) to be included in that revelation. For if any man can by any external authority be bound to believe anything to be the doctrine of Christ, which at the same time his best understanding necessitates him to believe is not that doctrine, he is unavoidably under the absurdity of being obliged to obey two contrary masters, and to follow two inconsistent rules at once. The only rule of faith, therefore, to every Christian is the doctrine of Christ, and that doctrine as applied to him by his own understanding. In which matter, to preserve his understanding from erring,

he is obliged indeed, at his utmost peril, to lay aside all vice and all prejudice, and to make use of the best assistances he can procure. But after he has done all that can be done, he must of necessity at last understand with his own understanding, and believe with his own, not another's, faith. For (whatever has sometimes been absurdly pretended to the contrary,) it is evidently as impossible in nature that in these things any one person should submit himself to another, as that one man should see or taste, should live or breathe, for another. Nor is it of any moment in this case what the degree of any man's capacity or understanding be. For, concerning the truth and reasonableness of a doctrine, so far as the person can be under any moral obligation to receive it, it is evident (as a late judicious writer has well expressed this matter,) that every person, in what circumstances and in what capacity soever, making use of all the means which God has afforded, is as able to judge for himself as it is possible he should be, in the same circumstances and with the same capacity, to judge (amidst the infinite contentions of a learned world,) what other person or number of persons is best qualified to judge for him.

Wherefore, in every inquiry, doubt, question, or controversy concerning religion, every man that is solicitous to avoid erring is obliged to have recourse (according to the best of his capacity) to the rule itself, to the original revelation; using, as is before said, all the helps and assistances he can

obtain, but still taking care to use them only as helps and assistances, not confounding and blending them with the rule itself.

*Where* that rule is to be found by every sincere Christian, is very evident. Whatever our Lord himself taught (because his miracles proved his divine authority,) was infallibly true, and to us (in matters of religion) the rule of truth. Whatever his Apostles preached (because they were inspired by the same spirit, and proved their commission by the like testimony of miracles,) was likewise a part of the rule of truth. Whatever the Apostles wrote, (because they wrote under the direction of the same spirit by which they preached,) was in like manner a part of the rule of truth. Now in the books of Scripture is conveyed down to us the sum of what our Saviour taught, and of what the Apostles preached and wrote. And were there as good evidence, by any certain means of tradition whatsoever, of any other things taught by Christ or his Apostles, as there is for those delivered down to us in these writings, it could not be denied but that such tradition would be of the same authority, and in every respect as much a part of the rule of truth, as the Scripture itself. But since there is no such tradition (and, indeed, in the nature of things there can be no such tradition,) at this distance of time, therefore the books of Scripture are to us now not only the rule, but the whole and only rule of truth in matters of religion.

This notion is well expressed by Irenæus: "We

have not," saith he, "been taught the method of our salvation by any others than by those from whom the Gospel itself was delivered to us, which the Apostles at first preached, and afterwards, by the will of God, delivered down to us in writing, that it might be the foundation and pillar of our faith. And it is impious to imagine that they preached before they had perfect knowledge of what they were to deliver, as some who boast themselves to be amenders of the Apostles' doctrine have presumed to affirm. For, after our Lord was risen from the dead, and they were indued by the Holy Ghost with power from on high, they were fully instructed, and had perfect knowledge in all things, and went forth into the ends of the world declaring the good things which God has provided for us, and preaching peace from heaven unto men, having all and each of them the Gospel of God. Thus Matthew set forth the Gospel in writing, &c."

Nevertheless, though the whole Scripture is the rule of truth, and whatever is there delivered is infallibly true, yet because there is contained in those writings great variety of things, and many occasional doctrines and decisions of controversies which, though all equally true, yet are not all equally necessary to be known and understood by all Christians of all capacities, therefore the church from the beginning has out of Scripture selected those plain fundamental doctrines which were there delivered as the terms or conditions of salvation, of necessity to be known and understood by all Chris-

tians whatsoever. And these, all persons were taught in their Baptismal Creed, which was therefore universally called the rule of faith; not that itself was of any authority, any otherwise than as it expressed the sense of Scripture, but that it was agreed to be such an extract of the rule of truth as contained all the things immediately, fundamentally, and universally necessary to be understood and believed distinctly by every Christian.

The Baptismal Creed, I say, must of necessity contain explicitly in it at least all the fundamentals of faith; because whatever is fundamental is necessary to salvation: and it is a manifest absurdity that anything should be necessary to the salvation of a Christian and yet not be expressly required to be explicitly believed by him at his baptism (or confirmation), when he is admitted into the Christian church. For, to admit any person to be a member upon certain terms or conditions, and afterwards to alter or add to those terms, is what in other cases men never allow.

But in process of time, as men grew less pious and more contentious, so in the several churches they enlarged their creeds and confessions of faith, and grew more minute in determining unnecessary controversies, and made more and more things explicitly necessary to be understood, and (under pretence of explaining authoritatively) imposed things much harder to be understood than the Scripture itself, and became more uncharitable in their censures; and the further they departed from the

fountain of catholic unity, the apostolical form of sound words, the more uncertain and unintelligible their definitions grew, and good men found nowhere to rest the sole of their foot, but in having recourse to the original words of Christ himself and of the spirit of truth, in which the wisdom of God had thought fit to express itself.

For, matters of speculation indeed, of philosophy or art, things of human invention, experience or disquisition, improve generally from small beginnings to greater and greater certainty, and arrive at perfection by degrees: but matters of revelation and divine testimony are, on the contrary, complete at first; and the Christian religion was most perfect at the beginning, and the words of God are the most proper significations of his will and adequate expressions of his own intention; and the forms of worship set down in Scripture, by way either of precept or example, are the best and most unexceptionable manner of serving him.

In the days of the Apostles, therefore, Christianity was perfect, and continued for some ages in a tolerable simplicity and purity of faith and manners, supported by singular holiness of life, by charity in matters of form and opinions, and by the extraordinary guidance of the Spirit of God, the spirit of peace, holiness and love. Particularly it is remarkable that for the space of three centuries the creeds of all the churches in the world, both Greek and Latin, in Europe, Asia, and Africa, were in sense uniform, and stood clear from matters of philoso-

phical controversy. But needless contentions arose by degrees, and faith became more intricate and charity diminished, and human authority and temporal power increased, and the regards of this life grew greater, and of the next life less : and in the fourth century metaphysical uncertainties began to be determined in creeds; and the emperors, according as different factions prevailed\*, began by their edicts to punish those who received not every prevailing speculation with banishments, and soon after with death ; and superstitious regards were paid to relics and departed saints, and religion decayed continually more and more, till at last (according to the predictions of the Apostles,) it was swallowed up in the great apostacy ; out of which it began to recover in good measure at the Reformation, when the doctrine of Christ and his Apostles was again declared to be the only rule of truth, in which were clearly contained all things necessary to faith and manners. And had that declaration constantly been adhered

\* They object to us tradition and the consent of all ages. But do we not yet know the deceitfulness of such words? Is any man that is acquainted with the craft of founding sects or of managing votes in popular assemblies, ignorant how easy it is to carry things in a violent stream? And when any opinion has once mastered its first opposers, and settled itself in men's passions or interests, how few there be that coolly consider what they admit for a long time after? So that when they say that all antiquity is against us, if it is true, in show, they object to us the wisdom of many ages ; but, in reality, they only confront us with the authority of a few leading men.  
—*Sprat's History of the Royal Society*, p. 42.

to, and human authority in matters of faith been disclaimed in deeds as well as in words, there had been, possibly, no more schisms in the church of God, nor divisions of any considerable moment among Protestants.

But though contentions and uncharitableness have prevailed in practice, yet, thanks be to God, the root of unity has continued amongst us; and the Scripture has universally been declared to be the only rule of truth, a sufficient guide both in faith and practice; and those who differ in opinion have done so only because each party has thought their own opinion founded in Scripture; and men are required to receive things for no other cause and upon no other authority, than because they are found (and, consequently, in no other sense than wherein they are found,) in the Holy Scriptures. Wherefore, in any question of controversy concerning a matter of faith, Protestants are obliged (for the deciding of it) to have recourse to no other authority whatsoever, but to that of Scripture only.

The incomparable Archbishop Tillotson has made this sufficiently appear in his Rule of Faith, particularly part i. sect. 3, and part iv. sect. 2.

And in his first sermon, on Joshua xxiv. 15, "Now lest any," saith he, "should think me singular in this assertion, and that thereby I give a great deal too much to the single judgement of private persons, and too little to the authority of a church, I will produce the deliberate judgement of a very learned man, and a great asserter of the



Church's authority, concerning the matter I am now speaking of; I mean Mr. Hooker, in his deservedly admired book of Ecclesiastical Polity. His words are these: 'I grant,' says he, 'that proof derived from the authority of man's judgement is not able to work that assurance which doth grow by a stronger proof; and therefore, although ten thousand general councils should set down one and the same definitive sentence concerning any point of religion whatsoever, yet one demonstrative reason alleged, or one testimony cited from the Word of God himself to the contrary, could not choose but oversway them all; in as much as for them to be deceived is not so impossible as it is that demonstrative reason or divine testimony should deceive.' And again: 'For men,' says he, 'to be tied and led by authority, as it were with a kind of captivity of judgement, and though there be reason to the contrary, not to listen to it, but follow like beasts the first in the herd, this were brutish.' Again: 'That the authority of men should prevail with men either against or above reason, is no part of our belief. Companies of learned men, though they be never so great and reverend, are to yield unto reason; the weight whereof is no whit prejudiced by the simplicity of the person which doth allege it; but being found to be sound and good, the bare opinion of men to the contrary must of necessity stoop and give place.' And this he delivers, not only as his own particular judgement, but that which he apprehended to be the judge-

ment of the Church of England." Thus far that excellent Archbishop. (Second edition, page 18.)

And the very learned and judicious Dr. Wake : " I choose rather," saith he in the name of every Christian, " to regulate my faith by what God hath delivered, than by what man hath defined." (*Comment. on the Church Catechism*, page 21.)

And the excellent Mr. Chillingworth : " By the religion of Protestants," saith he, " I do not understand the doctrine of Luther, or Calvin, or Melancthon ; nor the Confession of Augusta or Geneva ; nor the Catechism of Heidelberg ; nor the Articles of the Church of England ; no, nor the harmony of Protestant Confessions ; but that wherein they all agree, and which they all subscribe with a greater harmony, as a perfect rule of their faith and actions ; that is, the Bible. The Bible, I say, the Bible only, is the religion of Protestants. Whatsoever else they believe besides it, and the plain, irrefragable, indubitable consequences of it, well may they hold it as a matter of opinion. But as matter of faith and religion, neither can they, with coherence to their own grounds, believe it themselves, nor require the belief of it of others, without most high and most schismatical presumption. I, for my part, after a long and (as I verily believe and hope) impartial search of the true way to eternal happiness, do profess plainly, that I cannot find any rest for the sole of my foot but upon this rock only. I see plainly, and with mine own eyes, that there are popes against popes, councils against councils,

some fathers against others, the same fathers against themselves, a consent of fathers of one age against a consent of fathers of another age, the church of one age against the church of another age. Tradition, but only of Scripture, can derive itself from the fountain; but may be plainly proved, either to have been brought in, in such an age after Christ, or that in such an age it was not in. In a word, there is no sufficient certainty but of Scripture only for any considering man to build upon. This, therefore, and this only, I have reason to believe; this I will profess; according to this I will live; and for this, if there be occasion, I will not only willingly, but even gladly lose my life; though I should be sorry that Christians should take it from me. Propose me anything out of this book, and require whether I believe it or no, and seem it never so incomprehensible to human reason, I will subscribe it with hand and heart, as knowing no demonstration can be stronger than this: God hath said so, therefore it is true. In other things, I will take no man's liberty of judgement from him, neither shall any man take mine from me. I will think no man the worse man nor the worse Christian: I will love no man the less for differing in opinion from me; and what measure I mete to others I expect from them again. I am fully assured that God does not, and therefore that men ought not, to require any more of any man than

this : To believe the Scripture to be God's word, to endeavour to find the true sense of it, and to live according to it." (Chap. vi. sect. 56.)

Again: "Let all men," saith he, "believe the Scripture, and that only, and endeavour to believe it in the true sense, and require no more of others; and they shall find this, not only a better, but the only means to suppress heresy and restore unity. For he that believes the Scripture sincerely, and endeavours to believe it in the true sense, cannot possibly be a heretic. And if no more than this were required of any man to make him capable of the church's communion, then all men so qualified, though they were different in opinion, yet notwithstanding any such difference, must be of necessity one in communion." (*Preface by the Author of Charity Maintained*, sect. the last.)

And again : "Certainly if Protestants be faulty in this matter, [in the question about the extent of human authority,] it is for doing it too much, and not too little. This presumptuous imposing of the senses of men upon the words of God, the special senses of men upon the general words of God, and laying them upon men's consciences together, under the equal penalty of death and damnation; this vain conceit, that we can speak of the things of God better than in the words of God; this deifying our own interpretations, and tyrannous enforcing them upon others; this restraining of the word of God from that latitude and generality, and the understandings of men from that liberty wherein

Christ and the Apostles left them, is and hath been the only fountain of all the schisms of the church, and that which makes them continue the common incendiary of Christendom, and that which tears into pieces, not the coat, but the bowels and members of Christ, [*ridente Turcâ, nec dolente Judæo,*] to the great satisfaction of Jews and infidels. Take away these walls of separation, and all will quickly be one; take away this persecuting, burning, cursing, damning of men, for not subscribing to the words of men as the words of God; require of Christians only to believe Christ, and to call no man master but him only; let those leave claiming infallibility that have no title to it; and let them that in their words disclaim it, disclaim it likewise in their actions. In a word, take away tyranny, which is the devil's instrument to support errors and superstitions and impieties in the several parts of the world, which could not otherwise long withstand the power of the truth,—I say, take away tyranny, and restore Christians to their just and full liberty of captivating their understanding to Scripture only: and as rivers, when they have a free passage, run all to the ocean, so it may well be hoped, by God's blessing, that it may quickly reduce Christendom to truth and unity. These thoughts of peace, I am persuaded, may come from the God of peace, and to his blessing I commend them." (Chap. iv. sect. 16.)

And the learned Stillingfleet: "Without all controversy," saith he, "the main inlet to all the distractions, confusions, and divisions of the Chris-

tian world hath been by adding other conditions of church communion than Christ has done." (*Preface to Irenicum.*)

And the late eminent Dr. William Claget: "It has," saith he, "in all ages been esteemed sufficient to profess the [Apostles'] Creed, in order to admission into the Church by baptism." And again: "That the faith, the profession whereof is sufficient for baptism, is the faith that unites the Church into one body, cannot be denied, unless there be one faith to make a man a Christian, and another to make many Christians a church." (*Discourse of Church Unity.*)

And the excellent Mr. Hales: "It hath been," saith he, "the common disease of Christians from the beginning, not to content themselves with that measure of faith which God and the Scriptures have expressly afforded us; but, out of a vain desire to know more than is revealed, they have attempted to discuss things of which we can have no light, neither from reason nor revelation. Neither have they rested here, but, upon pretence of church authority (which is none), or of tradition (which for the most part is but figment), they have peremptorily concluded, and confidently imposed upon others, a necessity of entertaining conclusions of that nature; and, to strengthen themselves, have broke out into divisions and factions, opposing man to man and synod to synod, till the peace of the Church vanished without all possibility of recall. Hence arose those ancient and many separations among

Christians occasioned by Arianism, Eutychianism, Nestorianism, Photinianism, Sabellianism, and many more both ancient and in our time; all which, indeed, are but names of schism, howsoever, in the common language of the fathers, they were called heresies. For heresy is an act of the will, not of reason; and is indeed a lie, not a mistake; else how could that known speech of Austin go for true, [*Errare possum, hæreticus esse nolo*,] ‘I may err, but I will not be a heretic’? Indeed, Manichæism, Valentinianism, Marcionism, Mahometanism, are truly and properly heresies; for we know that the authors of them received them not, but minted them themselves, and so knew that which they taught to be a lie. But can any man avouch that others that taught erroneously did maliciously invent what they taught, and not rather fall upon it by error and mistake? &c.” (*Tract concerning Schism.*)

In the statutes given by Queen Elizabeth, of glorious memory, to Trinity College in the University of Cambridge, the following oath is appointed to be taken by every Fellow in the chapel, before his admission: “I N. N. do swear and promise in the presence of God, that I will heartily and stedfastly adhere to the true religion of Christ, and will prefer the authority of Holy Scripture before the opinions of men; that I will make the Word of God the rule of my faith and practice, and look upon other things, which are not proved out of the Word of God, as human only; . . . . that I will readily and with all my power oppose doctrines contrary to the,

Word of God; that, in matters of religion, I will prefer truth before custom, what is written before what is not written," &c.

And in the same University every Doctor in Divinity, at his taking that degree, does [*profiteri in theologiâ*] make his profession in the following words: "In the name of God, Amen: I A. B. do from my heart receive the whole sacred canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testament; and do hold or reject all that the true, holy, and apostolical church of Christ, subject to the Word of God, and being governed by it, holds or rejects; and in this profession I will persevere to my life's end, God of his great mercy giving me grace, through Jesus Christ our Lord."

And every priest at his ordination, [and bishop at his consecration,] being solemnly asked, "Are you persuaded that the Holy Scriptures contain sufficiently all doctrine required of necessity to eternal salvation through faith in Jesus Christ? And are you determined out of the same Holy Scriptures to instruct the people committed to your charge, and to teach [or maintain] nothing as required of necessity to eternal salvation, but that which you shall be persuaded may be concluded and proved by the Scripture?" answereth in the following words: "I am so persuaded, and have so determined, by God's grace."

And the whole Church of England, in the 6th, the 20th, and 21st of the Thirty-nine Articles, declares, "That Holy Scripture containeth all things



necessary to salvation; so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man that it should be believed as an article of the faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation: That it is not lawful for the Church to ordain anything that is contrary to God's word written; neither may it so expound one place of Scripture that it be repugnant to another. Wherefore, although the Church be a witness and a keeper of Holy Writ, yet as it ought not to decree anything against the same, so besides the same ought it not to enforce anything to be believed for necessity of salvation: That even general councils (for as much as they be an assembly of men, whereof all be not governed with the spirit and word of God,) may err, and sometimes have erred, even in things pertaining unto God; wherefore things ordained by them as necessary to salvation have neither strength nor authority, unless it may be declared that they be taken out of Holy Scripture."

The plain meaning of these and many other the like declarations to be found in our best writers, is not that matters of form, decency, and order are not to be appointed and settled by lawful authority, (without which there can be no visible and public communion of Christians,) nor that, in matters of faith, it can in any wise be excusable for men loosely and wantonly to run after enthusiastic imaginations; much less, that there is not perpetual need of living guides and instructors in the church of God, and of constant helps and direc-

tions for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ. But the meaning is, that it is the duty, and in the power of every particular Christian, by and with the use of all those helps and assistances which the Divine Providence has afforded him, soberly and in the fear of God to judge of, and to understand for himself, whatever is necessary for his own salvation: And that it is the great duty of Christian guides and instructors, especially of those in power and authority, to employ their utmost care and abilities, not in obliging men to receive things implicitly, but in assisting them to perceive and apprehend with their own understandings what are the things which God has required of them to believe and practise; and in giving as much encouragement as possible to all sober and impartial inquiries, as being the most reasonable and proper means of discovering the truth.

To apply this general doctrine (which is the great foundation of the Protestant and of the Christian religion,) to the controversies which have been raised, in particular, with too much animosity and uncharitableness, concerning the manner of explaining the Scripture doctrine of the Trinity, I have, in the first part of my *Scripture Doctrine of the Trinity*, (that it might appear what was not the sound of single texts, which may be easily mistaken, but the whole tenor of Scripture,) collected every text in the New Testament relating to that matter, (which I am not sensible has been done be-

fore,) and set them before the reader in one view, with such references and observations as may, it is hoped, be of considerable use towards the understanding of their true meaning.

In the second part is collected into methodical propositions the sum of that doctrine which (upon the carefulest consideration of the whole matter) appears to me to be fully contained in the texts cited in the first part. And I have illustrated each proposition with many testimonies out of the ancient writers, both before and after the Council of Nice, especially out of Athanasius and Basil; among which are several not taken notice of either by Petavius or the learned Bishop Bull. Concerning all which, I desire it may be observed, that they are not alleged as proofs of any of the propositions, (for proofs are to be taken from the Scripture alone,) but as illustrations only, and to show how easy and natural that notion must be allowed to be, which so many writers could not forbear expressing so clearly and distinctly, even frequently when at the time they were about to affirm, and endeavouring to prove some things not perhaps very consistent with it. The greatest part of the writers before and at the time of the Council of Nice, were, I think, really of that opinion, (though they do not always speak very clearly and consistently,) which I have endeavoured to set forth in those propositions. But as to the writers after that time, the reader must not wonder if many passages not consistent with (nay, perhaps contrary to,) those which are here cited,

shall by any one be alleged out of the same authors. For I do not cite places out of these latter authors so much to show what was the opinion of the writers themselves, as to show how naturally truth sometimes prevails by its own native clearness and evidence, even against the strongest and most settled prejudices; and how men are frequently compelled to acknowledge such premises to be true, as necessarily infer a conclusion different from what they intend to establish. According to that of Basil, "I am persuaded," saith he, "that the strength of the doctrine delivered down to us has often compelled men to contradict their own assertions."

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It is a thing very destructive of religion, and the cause of almost all divisions among Christians, when young persons, at their first entering upon the study of divinity, look upon human and perhaps modern forms of speaking as the rule of their faith; understanding these also according to the accidental sound of the words, or according to the notions which happen at any particular time to prevail in the world, and then picking out (as proofs) some new single texts of Scripture, which to minds already strongly prejudiced must needs seem to sound, or may easily be accommodated the same way; while they attend not impartially to the whole scope and general tenour of Scripture. Whereas, on the contrary, were the whole Scriptures first

thoroughly studied and seriously considered, as the rule and only rule of truth in matters of religion, and the sense of all human forms and expressions deduced from thence, the greatest part of errors, at least the greatest part of the uncharitable divisions that have happened among Christians, might in all probability have been prevented. The different states which the controversies concerning Predestination, Original Sin, Infant Baptism, Justification, Free-will, Faith and Good Works, and the doctrine of the ever-blessed Trinity have at different times gone through, are a sufficient evidence of this truth.

The Church of Rome, indeed, (that great human authority sitting in the seat of God,) requires men to receive her particular doctrines (or explications of doctrines) and traditions, not as human and fallible determinations, to be perpetually compared with and examined by the infallible rule, but as being part of the rule itself of their faith. But the Protestant churches utterly and solemnly disclaim all such authority, and require men to comply with their respective forms upon no other ground but that of their being agreeable to Scripture, and consequently, in such sense only, wherein they are agreeable to Scripture.

The first Reformers, when they had laid aside what to them seemed intolerable in the doctrines of the Church of Rome, in other matters chose to retain the words which they found in use in that Church, yet declaring that they meant thereby to

express only the sense of Scripture, and not that of tradition, or of the schools. If tradition or custom, if carelessness or mistake, either in the compiler or receiver, happen at any time to put a sense upon any human forms different from that of the Scripture, which those very forms were intended to explain, and which is at the same time declared to be the only rule of truth, it is evident no man can be bound to understand those forms in such sense; nay, on the contrary, he is indispensably bound not to understand or receive them in such sense. For (as the learned Mr. Thorndike rightly observes,) that which once was not matter of faith, can never by process of time, or any act the Church can do, or by any interpretation of words, that custom, or carelessness, or contentiousness may have introduced, become matter of faith. (*Epilogue*, part iii. p. 155.)

As, in reading a comment upon any book whatsoever, he that would thence understand the true meaning of the text, must not barely consider what the words of the comment may possibly of themselves happen most obviously to signify, but how they may be so understood, as to be a consistent interpretation of the text they are to explain; so, in considering all forms of human composition in matters of religion, it is not of importance what the words may in themselves possibly most naturally signify, or what they may vulgarly and carelessly be understood to mean, (for there is in almost all words some ambiguity,) but in what sense they can be consistent expositions of those texts of Scripture.

which they were intended and are professed to interpret. Otherwise it may easily (nay, it will frequently) happen, that a comment shall in effect come into the place of the text, and another interpretation afterwards into the place of that comment; till in process of time, men by insensible degrees depart entirely from the meaning of the text, and human doctrines swallow up those which are divine. Which evil can no otherwise be prevented than by having recourse perpetually to the original itself, and allowing no authority to any interpretation any further than it is evidently agreeable to the text itself.

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Not to mention many examples of this kind in almost all the Confessions of Faith that ever were published; there is one very remarkable instance of it in the Apostles' Creed itself. The word *hell*, in the present common use of the English language, signifies always the place or state of the damned; and every vulgar English reader, when he professes his belief that Christ descended into hell, is apt to understand the article, as signifying Christ's descending into the place of the damned; and probably they who first put the article into the Creed, in the fourth century, might mean and intend it should be so understood. Nevertheless, since all learned men are satisfied that the Greek word (*αδης*) in those texts of Scripture upon which this article was founded, does not signify 'hell', but in general only 'the invisible place into which the

souls of those departed out of this world are conveyed', they now with great reason think themselves obliged to understand it in the Creed, not as the word may in modern speech seem to sound to the vulgar, but as it really signifies in the original texts of Scripture.

\* \* \* \*

There are some who have thought that we ought not at all to treat concerning any of these matters, because they are mysterious. By which, if they meant that so far as the words of God are mysterious, we ought to acquiesce in them implicitly, and not presume to be wise beyond what is written, no man could say that herein they judged amiss. But if they mean that the words of men are mysterious\*, and that we must not reason concerning them, nor inquire whether or no, and in what sense they are agreeable to the words of God, what is this but substituting another mystery in the stead of the true one, and paying deference to the mystery of man's making, instead of the mystery of God? The true veneration of mysteries consists, not in making them ourselves, and in receiving blindly the words of men without understanding them; but it consists, either in taking care there to

\* A most remarkable instance of this kind may be observed in the modern use of the words 'humanity' and 'divinity', 'human nature' and 'divine nature,' which, being really nothing but abstract terms or notions, have yet frequently been spoken of, with the utmost absurdity, as beings or persons either acting or suffering.



stop where the Scripture itself has stopped, without presuming to go further at all; or else, in taking care to understand all words of human institution in such a sense as that they be sure to signify neither more nor less than the words of Scripture necessarily and indisputably do. Whosoever puts any meaning upon words of human institution which does not appear to another (upon his sincerest and most careful examination) to be the same with the sense of the words of Scripture, must not complain that the other opposes his own reason to the authority of God, when indeed he opposes it only to those who would make human authority the same with divine. Affecting to speak unintelligibly where the Scripture itself has not done so, is indeed promoting scepticism only, not true religion. Nor can there be any other so effectual a way of confuting all heresies, as it would be to restrain men within the bounds of the uncontested doctrine of Scripture, and give them as few advantages as possible of raising objections against human and fallible forms of speaking.

Lastly, as to those who, in the whole, are of opinion that every man ought to study and consider these things according to his ability, and yet in the particulars of the explication have quite different notions from those which I have thought reasonable and necessary to set forth in the following papers, I have, with regard to such persons as these, endeavoured to express myself with all modesty and due submission. And if any learned

person, who thinks me in an error, shall, in the spirit of meekness and Christianity, propose a different interpretation of all the texts I have produced, and deduce consequences therefrom different from those which seem to me unavoidably to follow, I shall think myself obliged either to return him a clear and distinct answer in the same spirit of meekness and candour, or else fairly and publicly to retract whatsoever is not capable of being so defended. But if, on the contrary, any nameless and careless writer shall, in the spirit of Popery, contend only that men must never use their own understandings, that is, must have no religion of their own, but, without regarding what is right or wrong, must always plead for what notions happen at any time to prevail ; or if any person, picking out only a few texts for form's sake, shall contend for an hypothesis, without showing how to reconcile it with the whole Scriptures, I shall have no reason in such case to think myself under the same obligation of answering him. It is the great, and indeed of all others the most fatal calamity in the Church of Rome, that while the people think they cannot but be very safe in following the unanimous opinion of such numbers of very learned men, those learned men are not, in truth, at liberty to have any opinion at all, but are obliged to employ all their learning merely in defending what the most ignorant men in former ages have determined for them beforehand.

THE END.

**PRINTED BY RICHARD TAYLOR,  
RED LION COURT, FLEET STREET.**

THE IMPORTANCE OF RELIGIOUS TRUTH, AND THE  
CERTAINTY OF ITS UNIVERSAL DIFFUSION.

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A

# SERMON,

PREACHED

*AT THE UNITARIAN CHAPEL,*

IN

PARLIAMENT COURT, ARTILLERY LANE,

LONDON,

ON WEDNESDAY, JUNE 13, 1821,

BEFORE

THE SUPPORTERS AND FRIENDS

OF THE

**Unitarian Fund.**

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BY

WILLIAM HINCKS.

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London :

SOLD BY R. HUNTER, (SUCCESSOR TO MR. JOHNSON,)  
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T. BESLEY, JUN., EXETER.

1821.

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*Printed by* GEORGE SMALLFIELD, *Hackney.*

TO THE  
**Supporters of the Unitarian Fund,**

AN

INSTITUTION, IN HIS JUDGMENT EMINENTLY USEFUL  
IN PROMOTING THAT SACRED TRUTH, OF WHICH HE  
HAS HERE ENDEAVOURED TO DISPLAY THE IMPORTANCE  
AND ANTICIPATE THE PROGRESS,

THIS

**Discourse,**

DELIVERED AT THEIR ANNIVERSARY,  
HONOURED WITH THEIR APPROBATION,

AND

PUBLISHED BY THEIR DESIRE,  
IS RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED,

BY

THEIR FAITHFUL FRIEND AND FELLOW-LABOURER,

**THE AUTHOR.**

*Lately published, by the same Author,*

THE

PRACTICAL EFFECTS

OF THE

Doctrine of the Simple Humanity of Christ,

A SERMON,

PREACHED BEFORE


THE WESTERN UNITARIAN SOCIETY,

ON WEDNESDAY, JULY 19, 1826.

A

## SERMON,

§c. §c.



1 TIM. ii. 4:

WHO WILL HAVE ALL MEN TO BE SAVED,  
AND TO COME TO THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE  
TRUTH.

I AM disposed to think that this text is over-strained when applied to the condition of mankind in a future state of being. L

*To be saved* seems to me here to have no immediate, certainly no exclusive reference to the happiness of another world, but to mean, as it often does in the writings of the New Testament, in a general sense, "to participate in the blessings of the Christian religion of whatsoever kind." It is plainly equivalent with *coming to the knowledge of the truth*, only that this latter expression refers to the means by which the benefits implied in the former, as deliverance from the bondage of a ceremonial law, from the corruption of ido-



latry and vice, and from the fear of death—must be obtained.

I understand the doctrine taught by the apostle to be, that the Gospel of Jesus is freely offered to all, and is adapted to the wants of all of every nation, and in every different station in society; and that it must continue to be diffused until it shall universally prevail throughout the world, the whole family of mankind worshipping and serving the *one God*, according to the instructions of *the one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus*.

Taking this to be the sense of the text, it suggests some important and interesting reflections, peculiarly suitable to the occasion on which I have now the satisfaction of addressing you, because calculated to confirm us in the conviction that we are acting right in giving our support to the society as friends of which we are here met together, and to inspire us with fresh zeal and ardour in the glorious cause for which it unites our exertions.

In the first place, we are led to consider the inestimable value of religious truth, of which as Christians, we can hardly think too highly, since its communication has been the purpose of the whole series of divine revelations, and our honoured Master particularly describes himself as having *come into the world that he might bear witness unto the truth*. In our text, the knowledge of it is connected with *salvation*—with deliver-

ance from mental degradation and moral corruption, with the highest happiness and the best hopes to which man can attain.

It is worthy of observation, how frequently the image of *light* is employed in the New Testament to represent the character and effects of the Gospel—a figure beautifully expressive of the dependence of all the blessings of pure religion on the possession of its truths, and of the extent and importance of the communications of divine knowledge made to mankind by our Lord Jesus Christ: for not more necessary are the beams of the luminary of heaven to direct us in the employments of the day, and enliven our progress through it, than are the bright irradiations of sacred truth to instruct us in the duties of life and cheer us amidst its vicissitudes. So completely is a right belief in the doctrines and promises of Christianity the foundation and the source of all its influences on the mind, that the word *faith* is not unfrequently used alone, in Scripture, to express the whole system—and most reasonably—for who can imagine the possession of the practical benefits of religion without the mind being enlightened with its truths? This would, indeed, be for figs to grow on the thorn and grapes on the bramble-bush. It would be for the wilderness to yield the fruits of industrious cultivation, and soft fertilizing showers to fall from the dry and cloudless atmosphere.

Truth is not variable and multiform, as the per-

ceptions of human minds, but certain, immutable and eternal. It is as real as the existence, the attributes and the laws of that perfect and glorious Being, in the right knowledge of whose nature, works and ways it consists. Those circumstances respecting the character and perfections of the Deity, and his dealings with man, the knowledge of which is especially calculated to influence the worship and service we pay him, and our hopes and expectations from him, constitute religious truth; and who does not perceive that its supreme importance is implied in the definition?

✓ In all the affairs of life, the greatest and the most trifling, our conduct depends on our opinions and belief; not always, indeed, on our professed opinions, or on the belief which our minds acknowledge in moments of serious reflection, but invariably and necessarily on our conviction or impression at the moment. In proportion, then, as we are acquainted with the real circumstances and relations of things; that is, so far as truth is our guide, our conduct is wise and prudent, and we are successful in obtaining the objects of our pursuit; whilst ignorance and erroneous opinions are the natural sources of failure and disappointment. On all other subjects, the advantages of knowledge and just views are generally admitted and felt; and if they are often disregarded in the case of religion, it is not from their being less evident to the intelligent observer; for there is no

quality which is acknowledged to belong to the true Christian character, which is not readily traced as a consequence to some principle revealed or peculiarly illustrated and enforced in the Gospel.

But there are, probably, few persons so entirely indifferent to truth as to deny its importance as a general principle; and we cannot imagine a believer in the divine authority of the Christian religion, who does not consider its effects on the condition of mankind vastly preferable to those of any other system. No tolerably well-informed and serious Christian can, one would think, be insensible to the superiority of his faith over all other forms of religion, even putting out of the question any opinion he may entertain of its necessity for future salvation from divine wrath. No professed disciple of Jesus can possibly think it an extravagant or unfounded pretension, that He has on some great and important subjects revealed truths calculated to produce a most advantageous change in the religious feelings and moral conduct of mankind; which change, so far as it has taken place, must be referred as an immediate effect to the doctrines inculcated. From a sincere reception of any opinions, their practical consequences directly and necessarily result, and where we observe a manifest inconsistency between the creed and the conduct, the only just inference is, that it is either thoughtlessly or hypocritically professed. The

absurd notion that opinions have no practical importance, and are altogether indifferent, can be maintained with any appearance of consistency only by those who either do not at all believe in the real existence of truth, or who, contrary to all reason and experience, regard actions as the insulated effects of an independent and capricious will, instead of the natural results of our present state of mind in connexion with our external circumstances. It is a notion which destroys the value of all religion whatsoever, and makes Atheism or universal Scepticism as estimable as the purest and most elevated faith.

But we must not now be contented with a mere general acknowledgment of the value of Christianity, as opposed to the gross and pernicious errors which have prevailed, and do still prevail in the world. We know of no division of what we esteem to be truths into those which are essential, or, at least, highly valuable, and those which are non-essential or practically indifferent; to which last class we often hear the differences of opinion which exist amongst Christians referred; an error which appears to me, not much less hurtful, though less revolting to our amiable and charitable feelings, than that of confining eternal salvation within the narrow pale of a sect. I shall endeavour, and shall not, I trust, find it a difficult task to expose the sources of both, and to reconcile genuine liberality and

charity, with a fervent zeal for what appear to us to be the uncorrupted truths of religion. Both of the extremes we have noticed originate in, or are connected with, a neglect of the direct practical influences of opinions; both of them separate, in our consideration, the belief from the conduct, between which there is really that connexion and mutual dependence, that neither can possibly be rightly attended to whilst the other is disregarded. A man may act rightly from a wrong motive and with a false view, but then it is evident that his conduct is only so far morally excellent as his principle and motives are good. On the other hand, a man with the purest and most correct belief may conduct himself in an unworthy and disgraceful manner, from his opinions having been merely examined and adopted in speculation, but not reflected upon in their practical bearings, or so seriously and warmly embraced as to be wrought into the feelings and influence the actions. A man may in his study entertain and defend the justest and noblest sentiments, and yet, viewing them merely as matters of inquiry which afford opportunities for the exercise of his powers, and leaving his mind under the controul of degrading passions and low pursuits, may derive little, though it is hardly possible that he should not derive some, benefit from them. Again, it is very possible to maintain and firmly believe doctrines which, if pursued into their consequences and fairly applied,

would be productive of the very worst effects ; and yet from the opposite influence of some better principles received at the same time, and the practical effects of which are more pressed upon our attention, to conduct ourselves in a manner which would do credit to any opinions ; yet in this case we do not escape the effects of our errors ; they are only partially counteracted, and there must necessarily be much that is wrong in our religious feelings or conduct so long as there is any thing materially wrong in our opinions. Error in itself, where it is not the consequence of gross neglect of opportunities for obtaining knowledge, or obstinately persevered in, in the face of evidence, cannot be criminal, for it is involuntary ; and to represent it as a cause of the Divine displeasure, or of eternal condemnation, is not only inconsistent with all rational views of the character of the Deity, but is directly opposed to that religion which has repeatedly and variously expressed the sentiment of the following interesting declarations : *If I had not come and spoken to them, they had not had sin. The times of ignorance God winked at. To him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.* Thus viewed, it is to be considered precisely in the same light with the natural evils which, for the wisest and best purposes, are so largely distributed amongst mankind ; but it is not the less an evil because it is without criminality. Who ever heard of harmless disease, or doubted

the kindness of removing it? We may be reduced to a very alarming condition without any thing in our feelings or appearance indicating our disordered state, or leading us to seek a remedy; but the notion of our health being practically independent of the changes which take place in our bodily frame, so that our internal structure might be deranged, and our vital organs become unfit for the proper discharge of their functions, without our being the worse for it, would be altogether contradictory and ridiculous. So we are not in general ourselves most easily made sensible of the error of our sentiments, and it is not always readily and plainly discernible in our conduct; but it is absolutely impossible that those principles and opinions on which all our actions depend, except so far as they are the mere effects of passion and momentary impulse, should be corrupted or disordered without our conduct, or the state of our feelings towards God and our neighbour, being really and materially the worse for it. However frequently we may hear the expression employed, there is in fact no such thing as a *merely speculative opinion*. Every particular of belief has its appropriate effect, which, so far as it is sincere and lively, it must produce. It may be in some considerable degree modified and controuled by the interference of other opinions, or it may exist so feebly, and be so little an object of attention and reflection, as to be overpowered by the strength of appetite,



passion, or transient feeling; but in all cases it acts, and of course must, to a certain extent, be beneficial or injurious according as it is true or false, so that we might as rationally expect to find a plant bearing no fruit, as a doctrine which is capable of no practical application. In either case, resting with confidence on the laws of nature and of the human mind, and not presumptuously assuming the perfection of his own knowledge, the true philosopher will endeavour by farther and more careful investigation to discover what he is persuaded must exist, though it has hitherto eluded his notice.

To say that we believe certain religious opinions to be erroneous, but we think their correction of no importance because they are not practically injurious, is seemingly to charge our brethren with taking no real interest in what are the most prominent parts of their creed. It is certainly to pretend to an acquaintance with the state of their minds, with their motives, feelings, and affections, as well as with their ordinary conduct, without which we can form no tolerably correct judgment on the effects of their opinions.

The man who maintains the belief of certain doctrines which he holds to be true, to be abstractedly beneficial and absolutely necessary for escaping the wrath of God, or obtaining any portion of his favour—besides that he is manifestly chargeable with the bold impiety of employing the thunderbolts of the Almighty for terrifying

men into the reception of *his* dogmas—assigns to the possession of truth, a mysterious and incomprehensible importance, altogether distinct from that regard to its effects in reference to which alone we can imagine its value, and consequently he requires for it the fearful prostration instead of the rational and affectionate homage of our minds. He calls upon us to submit our best powers to be trampled down, and to sacrifice them to be crushed under the wheels of an idol's chariot, instead of consecrating them with ennobling devotion to the honour and service of an intelligent and beneficent Deity. Let us only observe for a moment the difference in language and address, between the bigotted advocate of a damnatory creed, and the enlightened and liberal friend of truth. They may be equally zealous and eager in their pursuit, but how opposite are the means they employ! The one informs us, that we must believe what he delivers, or we cannot be saved. He appeals to the Scriptures; but if we understand their language differently from him, we are accused of perverting them, and he has the confidence of inspiration that he cannot be deceived. He may, perhaps, reason with us; but if we answer him, and continue unconvinced, we are told that carnal reason must be humbled and subdued; that we must seek the submissive faith, which can be overcome by no difficulties; and that if we persevere in rejecting his doctrines, our pride and obstinacy will just

cause our eternal misery ; nor can any virtues, however distinguished, save us from their consequences.

The other approaches us as a man fallible like ourselves. He reminds us of the great importance which must appear to every rational being to belong to religious truth, and of our mutual interest in obtaining it. We agree (we will take such a case) in receiving Christianity as a revelation from God, but it seems we have formed different notions respecting its doctrines. We may, probably, agree on some important points ; he hopes we both partake to some considerable degree in its beneficial influences ; but we cannot both be right ; and we can enjoy its blessings only in proportion as we possess its truths. He imposes nothing. He threatens nothing in God's name ; nor would he in his own if he possessed all earthly power ; but he has used the means which seemed to him fittest for forming a correct judgment ; he has decided, and he is as confident as erring mortal may reasonably be of any opinions. He would not force his views on any one ; he would not promote them by terror, nor does he undervalue the excellencies of those who differ from him ; but he feels himself authorized and bound, to the extent of his ability, to instruct the ignorant, to reason with the candid and inquiring, and to repel the calumny and abuse, and resist the various unworthy means by which it is attempted to crush that cause which he be-

believes to be the cause of truth, and consequently of man's best interests. He comes to us as feeling a brother's interest in our welfare. He desires not to command, but to convince us; he wishes for no assent but a reasonable one; and if unsuccessful, he leaves us, it may be, with feelings of disappointment and regret, but not of anger; for no one, he is aware, can force his own convictions, and truth, on whichever side it lies, is under God's care, so that it requires not his support though it claims his exertions; nor of disgust and abhorrence, for he thinks opinions important only on account of their tendency; but no one is altogether in error, and whatever advantages and blessings may be lost through erroneous views, he is sure that no vengeance will pursue them in another state.

To suppose that the Almighty Creator of mankind can condemn and abhor his creatures on account of the incorrectness of their belief, that is, for the want of those powers and opportunities which he has himself withheld, is so directly to contradict those glorious attributes which we are taught both by nature and revelation to ascribe to him, that the evidence must be clear and strong indeed by which we should suffer ourselves to be compelled to it. Seeing as we do the differences of opinion which prevail on all subjects, and which have necessarily resulted from the nature and structure of the human mind, the

2 notion that error can be in itself criminal and destructive, is in the highest degree horrible and repulsive,—whilst, that the advantages of divine knowledge should be variously and partially diffused, and only gradually extended, is in perfect analogy with other dispensations of Providence, and not irreconcilable even with our imperfect ideas of wisdom and benevolence.

But whilst we decisively declare against that doctrine of the value and efficacy of mere belief, which is the foundation of bigotry, intolerance and spiritual pride, which gives much of its fierceness to religious controversy, has been the grand pretence for persecution, and is the great bar to liberal and friendly intercourse between persons of different opinions; it is certainly not less necessary, nor does it less become us as the sincere friends of truth, to guard against the opposite extreme, more dangerous to the benevolent mind from the false air of candour and charity which it assumes, of attaching little interest to our opinions, and considering the belief as so unimportant, that hardly any change can be sufficiently beneficial to be worth the consequences of a disturbance of established prejudices and habits of thought. All Christians, we are accustomed to hear it argued, agree in what is most essential; they all believe enough for practical purposes; and the great difficulty, not to say impossibility, of coming to a satisfactory decision on the disputed

points; the number of truly pious and good men who have adorned almost every party; the liberal declarations of Scripture respecting the diffusiveness of the Divine favour; and the pre-eminence amongst the characteristics of pure Christianity of that charity which controversies respecting matters of faith must, it is asserted, necessarily disturb—are all pleaded as excuses for inactivity and indifference in the promotion of truth, and for rather keeping back than pressing on public attention our own peculiar views. Religion, it is observed, does not consist either in blind faith or ingenious controversy, and whilst we are relying on the imagined correctness of our creed, we are by no means likely to pay equal attention to that which alone is really essential, and to the improvement of which all our endeavours should be directed—our conduct.

To all this it may readily be answered, that although there is a strong bond of union amongst all believers in the divine mission of our Saviour, and there must, one would hope, be many good effects produced in common upon them all, so far as they are sincere and serious; yet, that their differences relate to the most important features of the Christian revelation, and render the character of their religious views and feelings strikingly distinct; that the conclusions we derive on religious subjects from the use of proper means, are at least equally satisfactory with those which direct our conduct in most of the affairs of life;

that the differences which have existed amongst those whose deep study and extensive knowledge might tempt us to implicit confidence, teach us the important lessons, that learning is not the chief thing for the discovery of divine truth, and that we can have no infallible human guides; but, whatever assistance we may obtain, must trust finally and chiefly to the exercise of our own understanding on the word of God—that though the Scriptures clearly shew the equitable nature of God's judgments in his gracious consideration for those who have not had the means of knowledge, yet that they are so far from undervaluing truth, that they constantly represent it as the origin and foundation of Christian excellence—that true Charity, enjoining us to serve our brethren even if it be at the expense of offending them, does not suffer us to sacrifice their real interest, which we believe to be in the knowledge of the truth, to the preservation of friendly relations with them, and that one of the qualities especially ascribed to it, is *rejoicing in the truth*—finally, that on this principle of indifference to opinions, all divine communications must seem to have been useless; that the mission of law-givers and prophets and of our blessed Lord himself—the labours of apostles and evangelists, and the sufferings of martyrs and confessors, have all been to no purpose. If they have not exalted the moral and religious condition and promoted the true happiness of mankind, wherefore were they sent, or

why should their zeal and constancy be admired? If they have, they have done so by the power of truths which they taught in opposition to the prejudices and passions of mankind, at the expense of general ferment, as well as of personal loss and suffering; and whilst we gratefully rejoice in possessing the fruits of their exertions, the least we can do is justly to estimate their conduct and endeavour to catch some portion of the holy zeal which inspired them.

It may, perhaps, be desirable, for greater clearness, to enlarge a little in answer to the plea for inactivity in the cause of truth, founded on the difficulty of obtaining satisfaction, and the variety of opinions which exists. That attentive examination should discover facts, and that the proper exercise of the mental faculties should derive from these facts principles and develope truths, is the usual course in every science; but in every science it has also been the case, that the paucity or inaccurate observation of facts has led to erroneous opinions, and that that philosophy has been the fruitful source of error, which constructs theories out of materials furnished by the imagination, and then violently forces facts into conformity with them. From these and similar causes of misapprehension and mistake, religion has not been free; it has even been exposed to more danger from them than other branches of knowledge. The declarations of Scripture, which are its facts, have been ne-



glected, or only seen through the distorting medium of theories derived from other sources; and, in opposition to the accumulated prejudices of ages, their genuine sense has been but slowly brought to light by the patient study of the sacred volume. But it is unreasonable, therefore, to deem truth inaccessible or uncertain; the same path which in all other cases conducts towards its attainment, does so in this also, and the serious and diligent inquirer may here obtain the same satisfaction which elsewhere rewards his labours, by establishing his belief and directing his conduct. That which is apt to create the greatest doubts as to the possibility of attaining to a reasonable conviction on religious subjects, is the very wide difference which is observed between the opinions and views of individuals who are considered as equally possessing the knowledge and talents which should qualify them to form a just judgment. But this is a deceitful mode of judging, since we cannot estimate the early and deeply-rooted prejudices, habits of thinking, and bias of mind, which, in particular instances, may have prevented all inquiry, or have made reflection a search for confirmation of already received opinions, instead of an impartial pursuit of truth.

He who knows any thing of the history of mankind, cannot help numbering many of the wise, the learned, and the good, amongst the advocates of opinions which he considers, and

which even have come to be generally considered, as false and absurd, and he learns from the contemplation of their errors, not to despise their attainments, but to be duly grateful for the superior advantage his situation affords him; not to doubt of truths appearing to his mind, after fair examination, to be established by sufficient evidence, but to rejoice that light has been obtained where once was darkness. It should be observed, that, upon the most important as well as the trifling affairs of life, we act not upon absolute certainty, but upon what we consider as a reasonable conviction; and though we continually see others around us who think and act in a way altogether contrary to what we do, we are not, on this account, led hastily to neglect our own opinions or change our own conduct; and if our convictions be the result of reflection and examination, we are undoubtedly in the right, for we are following a better guide than the authority of others can ever be. And in the same manner, the man who is conscious of having faithfully used the best means in his power for attaining to religious truth, and of having formed his judgment with caution and impartiality, has all the certainty which the case will allow, of his being in the right—all the certainty which God has seen fit to place within our reach; consequently, all which can be necessary for our satisfaction, and may act upon his convictions with undoubting confidence.

The number of excellent characters produced by various and opposing systems is easily explained, according to the principle that all opinions really believed and cherished exert some influence on the feelings or conduct, and that our opinions, in conjunction of course with our sensations and external circumstances, are the immediate sources of our actions, consequently, that on them the practical part of our character must depend. It is with systems as with individual characters—none are altogether evil. There can hardly have been any connected assemblage of doctrines ever devised which did not contain much of truth in it—certainly none can ever have been received by individuals without many truths being associated with it, and the degree of truth which actively exists in every mind produces good or counteracts evil. Nor is this all; men's constitutional characters and external circumstances are widely different, and consequently the degree in which they are exposed to be acted upon by temptations to various vices; so that we can by no means accurately judge of the merits of opinions from the conduct of a few individuals, but must observe the general behaviour of those who receive them. But though we may not often be able safely and fairly to argue from men's lives to their doctrines, we may always be certain that truth must be beneficial. The power of right sentiments may not be so necessary to some individuals as to others; but it is, without doubt,

very much needed by society at large, and none can possess them without advantage, consequently their diffusion is an object of incalculable importance. Indeed, if we compare together large masses of society, where we are exempted from most of the influences which mislead our judgment with respect to individuals, or small bodies, we can hardly fail of acknowledging the benefit of truth. We need only contrast the moral and social condition of the Jewish people with the degradation and corruption of their idolatrous neighbours. We need only compare the effects even of Muhammedanism with those of Paganism. We need but trace the history of Christianity, and mark the consequences of its extension in the amelioration of manners and the gradual improvement in the condition of society. We need but observe how when some of the errors which had crept into the church were removed, and the standard of Reformation was erected, the Protestants became conspicuous alike by the greater purity of their manners, and by their intellectual superiority. And can we then doubt the importance of the differences which exist between us and our fellow-christians in general? No schemes can well be more directly opposed than our notions of the Unity and paternity of God; of the design of our Saviour's mission, and the general end of the plans of Divine Providence, and the doctrines

usually accounted orthodox. Either we, or a great majority of our Christian brethren, must be deeply in error; and to say that it is of no consequence, is to say that our most cherished sentiments of piety and devotion, the only sources of our religious hope and joy, and our strongest incitements to obedience, are not worth the trouble of communicating—a most unsatisfactory proof of the use we have ourselves made of them. We are not blind to the merits of those of other persuasions, nor ought they in the least to lessen our confidence in the importance of our own views; for whatever differences there may be in the theory of religion, all Christians entertain such views of God and a future state, as in some way make virtue desirable to them—all acknowledge the authority of the Bible, and those whose conduct is eminently pious and charitable, are invariably those who love and study it most. The direct influence of the precepts and example of our Lord and his apostles may, to a considerable extent, counteract the influence of doctrines erroneously supposed to be taught by them. The Scriptures we all acknowledge as containing revealed truth, and they can hardly be so uniformly misunderstood, and throughout perverted by system, as for that truth never to reach and influence the mind. But it would be equally *wrong* of us to overlook or undervalue those excellencies of our brethren

which, being truly Christian, must have their origin in right views; and *weak* of us to give the merit of these excellencies, so easily traced to their right source, to opinions with which they may be accidentally connected, but which we are well convinced could never have originated them. If we are not greatly mistaken, we can perceive in various, but commonly in sufficiently conspicuous proportions, those feelings and actions which we should naturally expect to flow from some articles in the prevailing creed, and which we can by no means approve, to be intermixed with those which we recognise as the beautiful and admirable fruits of true Christianity, and which we contemplate with delight wherever we find them. It must of course be our opinion, that the more complete attainment of truth by those whom we admire, though we believe them to be in error, would confirm in them what is good, and tend to correct what is evil; would exalt their characters, and greatly increase their joy and satisfaction in the religion which they already adorn.

Nor is there any thing of arrogant pretension or illiberal spirit in these views. We do not confine to ourselves the Divine favour and acceptance; we do not condemn our brethren here on account of what we suppose to be their errors, nor anticipate their future condemnation; we do not despise the virtues they possess, nor withhold

from them our esteem because we cannot accept of their creed; but we are firmly convinced that truth must ever be an inestimable blessing, and that error must always be injurious to the extent of its influence. We believe Christianity to be a revelation of invaluable and most glorious truths, without the reception of which, in their unadulterated simplicity, it can never produce its full effects in promoting the virtue and happiness of mankind. We have examined and formed our judgment,—we have risked our salvation on our decision, and how should not our opinions be dear and precious to us? We do love and value them, and where is our philanthropy or our charity if we do not desire and endeavour to diffuse them?

We are taught that to spread the knowledge of the truth, and all the blessings which follow it, throughout the world, is worthy to be the especial care of Divine Providence; and shall it not then interest us, whose sublimest and most ennobling contemplations are upon the purposes and ways of the Almighty—whose most honourable and delightful employment is acting as the instruments of his plans and the messengers of his grace? Yes, we must hold religious truth in the highest estimation, and be ardently devoted to its service, if we are in any degree worthy of the blessings we enjoy, for from it they are derived—if we really love God, for in the know-

ledge of him, whom to know is to love, it consists —if we sincerely love our fellow-creatures, for it is the source of what we find most estimable in them at present, and the grand means of improving their moral and social condition, increasing their present happiness, and advancing their preparation for that which is to come. And shall every hope which can cheer the heart of philanthropy, give vigour to our struggles against the evils which surround us, and relieve our present disappointments with bright vistas of future good;—shall every warm and enthusiastic feeling, every generous and manly exertion which is awakened by a charity that looks beyond and above mere bodily wants and interests, be sacrificed to the fear of disturbing that hollow and worthless peace, which consigns all differences to silence, and is broken by the most candid discussion, or the mildest remonstrance against error? Not unless the stillness of the stagnant pool which exhales corruption, be preferable to the healthful swell and dashing of the ocean waves—not unless it be true charity to afford to all the smile and the benediction, but to pass on in pursuit of our own objects, without offering to bestow or attempting to relieve.

. But it is time I should proceed to the second reflection suggested by our text, that religious truth is adapted to the wants of all, and freely offered to all of every nation, and in every differ-



ent station in society. *God will have ALL men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth.* There are many who themselves feel a very lively interest in ascertaining the genuine doctrines of religion, and are to a certain extent sensible of the value of truth; who have tasted largely of its pleasures, and who are personally not inexperienced in its beneficial influences; who, nevertheless, feel no anxiety about its diffusion, because they think it adapted only for the enlightened, intelligent, and inquiring few by whom it is most likely to be obtained, and altogether unfit for the multitude, who they suppose must ever continue to be the dupes of error, absurdity, and superstition. This certainly cannot be esteemed a pleasing view of things by any generous mind; for whatever pride we may indulge in the idea that we are a privileged aristocracy, possessing a monopoly of the best of God's gifts, our contemplations on the condition of our brethren cannot be very gratifying, nor our reflections on Divine Providence very encouraging or satisfactory.

It excites melancholy or rouses indignation to see the aristocratic spirit prevailing to the extent that it does in the external relations of society; but even the hope of amelioration is annihilated, if we consider ignorance and mental degradation as the necessary inheritance of the majority of our fellow-creatures. On what ground, then,

are such gloomy notions entertained, and are we really obliged to admit them?

We will by no means deny, that the acquisition of religious truth requires intelligence and the active exercise of the mental powers, so that it cannot be attained, and if possessed could hardly be used, by the ignorant and unthinking crowd. In our idea, the Christian religion is a spiritual and intellectual one, which employs the faculties of the mind, and can never produce its proper effects without their aid; but we have not so low an opinion of mankind as to suppose that it is therefore above the reach of general usefulness. Even the lowest class of society is by no means necessarily blind, thoughtless, or liable to imposition in religious matters. Wherever men feel their interest to be concerned, and are roused by sufficiently powerful motives, they are generally quick in discernment and correct in reasoning; and the attainment of religious truth is by no means dependent on such stores of learning, or such labour in research, as to be inaccessible to the multitude who are necessarily engaged in the active pursuits of life.

An inquisitive spirit, a real interest in the subject, and some degree of general mental cultivation, are alone requisite, and these are often found, and may be generally diffused with a considerable portion of useful knowledge amongst even the lowest order of the community. The extension of education is the grand preparation

for the spread of truth—without it we can hope for little—with it we can confidently anticipate every thing which the warm and expansive wish of benevolence could desire.

We cannot hope, nor would we wish, to spread opinions which we deem true, as we see some religious doctrines to be diffused—merely by influencing the passions. We expect and desire to see sacred truth advancing only hand in hand with knowledge and the spirit of rational inquiry, which fully reconciles us to the slowness of its progress, and makes us gladly dispense with the sudden conversions and splendid success which attend the preaching of some of our brethren. If we can induce men to pause and consider, to hesitate and determine that they will examine, we have gained our object; and if the effect we produce be not always immediately conspicuous, we recollect who has said, that *the kingdom of God cometh not with observation*. We call to mind the comparisons by which he illustrated its silent but certain progress, and console ourselves that the grain of mustard-seed is already beginning to send forth its branches—that the leaven is in the lump, and will not cease to work until the whole be leavened.

If it could be proved to us, that what we esteem to be divine truth, is not calculated for the benefit and suited to the wants of society at large, we would desist from any attempts to spread it: I should rather say, if we were led

to doubt its practical utility, we would again examine, and with painful earnestness endeavour to decide whether we had mistaken the evidence of the doctrines, or their effects had been misunderstood; for truth which can be injurious, is an incongruous and absurd union of ideas, and we will never cherish the opinion which we cannot glory in fully acting upon—which we cannot trust for its good effects on all who embrace it. But if religious truth be really intended for, and offered to all mankind, we may flatter ourselves that our views are entitled to peculiar attention, as being best fitted for general prevalence in the most improved state of society; for it can hardly be denied us, that they are remarkable for simplicity, comprehensibility, and seeming reasonableness, which, I must contend, (not now to insist that they are the characteristics of *all* truth,) must be the characteristics of revealed truths *intended for general circulation and influence amongst mankind*. The ignorant and degraded mind may cling to its prejudices and hug its chains; or, in the fever of enthusiasm, the diseased taste may find its chief pleasure in mystery and extravagance. But shall we believe this to be the highest destiny of man? Can we believe that he is capable of no better things? As the eye to see and rejoice in the light, is not the mind formed for the reception of knowledge and truth? Do not the capacities of our minds plainly indicate the intention that we should

think and reason? And if the exercise of our powers be necessary to all of us in the ordinary affairs of life, and be acknowledged as the source of our most elevated pleasures, how can we suppose it to be unprofitable or impossible to the greatest number, on the noblest and most interesting of all subjects?

The religion given by God to his rational creature man, must naturally be expected to be a religion addressed to and capable of satisfying the understanding; yet such as can, at least in all its important characters, be comprehended and applied by individuals in ordinary circumstances, and enjoying no peculiar advantages of knowledge or contemplative leisure. Of such a religion, the belief must be extended and the influence increased commensurately with that diffusion of knowledge and general advancement of society, which it would itself largely contribute to promote. What is the necessary effect on a being constituted as man is, and in an age of spreading knowledge and inquiry of incomprehensible and revolting creeds, seeking the patronage and support of human laws, is but too plainly seen in the late lamentable spread of infidelity and scoffing at religion.

If, as we are persuaded, religion can be of no use except so far as it is understood and valued — if its moral influences, the hopes which it inspires, and the beneficial effects it produces on the social state, arise out of, and immediately

depend on its doctrines, and are observable only in proportion to the degree in which its truths are rightly comprehended, purely received, and affectionately cherished; then not only must we be impressed with a lively sense of the inestimable, paramount importance of truth, but with such a conviction that it must be intended equally for all, as it is really needed by all, that in holding it without endeavouring to diffuse it, we must seem to ourselves to shew how little we yet know of its value, or to render ourselves chargeable with the most sordid selfishness.

At the first introduction of the Gospel into the world, its preachers were furnished with supernatural means of attracting the attention and effecting the conviction of mankind. By the most astonishing miracles they proved the divinity of their mission; by the most extraordinary powers they were enabled to overcome the first difficulties which opposed their understanding. But these superior aids were very soon withdrawn, and the religion which in its infancy was attested by wonders and signs, and accompanied by heavenly gifts, was abandoned to its own resources, retaining only the well-authenticated narrative of its primitive history to prove its origin and justify its claims on the attention of the world. But can any one suppose, that because the extraordinary means were withdrawn, that therefore the ends of Providence were fully answered, and no further extension

of divine truth was intended? None can admit such a thought. Our blessed Saviour brought *glad-tidings of great joy for all people*. GOD WILL *have all men to be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth*. There must then be some other means provided for the diffusion of truth fully adequate to the purpose, and such as altogether to supersede the farther necessity of miraculous interference. So glorious, so all-important an object cannot be left dependent on accident or on feelings of individuals not necessarily arising out of the religion itself. Nor is it so—for the perception of truth, and the enjoyment of its benefits ourselves, the existence in our own hearts of Christian charity in its purest, most exalted form, compels us to feel an interest, and to use our best exertions in communicating it to others. Our zeal arises out of our convictions, and we cannot think that we should value Christianity as we ought, or shew ourselves to be truly under its influences, if it did not make us ardent and active in promoting the knowledge of it, or restoring it to its primitive simplicity.

The Gospel, then, is offered now and always to all men through the instrumentality of those who love it most warmly and feel it most truly. Divine truth is not the exclusive property of a learned and highly privileged few, but is equally fitted to serve all, and manifestly appears to be equally designed for all. It is the spiritual sun, in whose light all minds are naturally formed to

rejoice; and although many yet enjoy but an imperfect twilight or a cloudy day, though many yet sit in the deepest darkness, still as we are assured that from it alone the true greatness and happiness of man are derived, so we may cherish the most unhesitating confidence, that it will continue to rise upon the nations until all shall rejoice in its meridian brightness, until those blessings shall be universally diffused, which it alone can bestow—the highest and purest that man is capable of enjoying. This is the third reflection afforded by our text. *God will HAVE all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth.* It is not the design of his providence, and therefore it cannot be, that the heavenly truths which he has revealed should always be confined to a small proportion of his creatures, and controuled in their influences by a large admixture of error. They must extend themselves. Their triumph is as sure as the omnipotent benevolence of their author, and neither accident nor opposition can prevent their prevailing at the time which his wisdom has appointed.

Such expectations are commonly numbered among the pleasing delusions with which benevolence is amused by a wild and enthusiastic fancy. To me, on the contrary, they seem so solidly founded on the promises of Scripture, on the nature of Christianity, and on the past history of mankind, that I cannot help tracing much of the



despondence which exists, to false views of the Divine character and the end of religion—to a worldly spirit, to insensibility to the charms of truth and goodness, or a consciousness that we ourselves are doing nothing to promote them.

Compelled as I now feel to prescribe to myself narrow limits, and satisfied with the clear and striking declaration of my text, I shall not appeal to the glowing language of ancient prophecy, or extend my quotations of a surer and more important class from the words of our Lord and his Apostles. Indeed I can hardly suppose it to be contested by any believer in Christianity, that its general diffusion, and, of course, in its genuine state, appears to have been contemplated by its first inspired preachers, which affords the strongest presumption that such is the will of its Almighty Author, whose purposes cannot fail of being accomplished.

If we compare what must be the state of the world, supposing Christian precepts to be generally obeyed, with its actual condition, we cannot but feel that the Gospel is far from having produced its full effects on those who profess to receive it. There is yet much to be done before its influences on society, beneficial as they have already been, will seem at all in proportion with the sublimity of its doctrines, and the purity and benevolence of its spirit. Can it then possibly be imagined, that it has already exhausted its powers, and effected all that it is capable of doing ;

or is not the thought forced upon us, that its influences are progressive, and that the world has yet to experience its most glorious and happy results? And if we consider with ourselves why its efficacy has been diminished or retarded, to what cause can we attribute it, but to the corruptions which have obscured and almost overwhelmed it? And if the corruptions of Christianity have been the chief cause of whatever deficiency we observe in its effects on the state of mankind, we see that the gradual removal of those corruptions must be the gradual extension of its best blessings, and that every thing is to be hoped from well-directed endeavours to restore our holy faith to its primitive simplicity and purity.

*Why the former days were better than these*, is, upon a variety of subjects, and especially on religious subjects, a common, though, in the judgment of the preacher, not a wise inquiry. Without attempting at present a detailed discussion, I will offer a few thoughts tending to establish the continual progressive advancement of the human race in knowledge, virtue and happiness, and their tendency towards the attainment of the highest degrees of them which are consistent with their present nature. And, first, I would observe, that no step which has been made in the road of improvement has ever been really lost. Victory, empire, imaginary glory and eminence in literature and the ornamental arts,

have often been transferred from one people to another. When the progress of civilization took a wrong turn, and degenerated into degrading luxury, it was wisely checked. The knowledge and refinement acquired by one nation have by conquest been handed over to another, both being thus made partakers of the influences they had produced upon the condition of the people at large. The overwhelming of a refined and cultivated people by hordes of rude barbarians may have concealed, and seemingly suppressed, all the advantages which had been acquired; but their knowledge conquered their conquerors. It was like a covered stream whose course may be traced by the livelier green of the herbage through which it flows. Its own brilliancy and activity were for a time unseen, but its effects might easily be traced; and the real extension of the benefits of civilization at such a period, is as manifest to the philosophic observer as when it is accompanied by the greatest display, and its triumphs figure most on the page of history. But however the progress of improvement may have been concealed at times from our observation by the very means employed for promoting it, as the prospect is darkened and rendered gloomy by the clouds which descend in fertilizing and enlivening showers, as the turf is covered and defiled by that which enriches its growth and heightens its verdure—there is no real and satisfactory example of its having ever

been interrupted, much less retrograded, and the legitimate result of reflection on the past is confidence respecting the future. But, secondly, the course of Divine revelations has been progressive. The religion of the patriarchs was adapted to the infancy of human powers; Judaism was the restraint of their childhood; Christianity is the guide and friend of their mature age. The systems differ so completely in character, that either they cannot have proceeded from the same Being, or they must have been suited to different objects and circumstances. If, then, they have been rightly adapted, the condition of man must have been improved from one to the other, so that each was admirable in its season. We cannot escape the conclusion but in charging the Almighty with partiality, ignorance, or error. The series of revelations is of itself, to the believer in them, a demonstration of the progress of religious knowledge, and the gradual advancement of mankind in fitness for the blessings of pure religion. The history of Christianity, including all its reverses and corruptions, is really the history of its cautious diffusion, and of the wisest preparation for its most extended and purest influences.

But, the prevalence of truth implies general agreement of opinion on the leading topics of religious discussion, and it would seem as if the more men are led to inquire, the greater is the number of discordant sects which arises—the more evident

is the impossibility of men agreeing together on subjects which seem involved in irremediable doubt. This at first sight appears a difficulty, but we have no opportunity of judging of the effect of all men being left to themselves and freed from the prejudices of education in particular systems. I have no doubt that they would come more nearly to the same conclusion respecting the doctrines of revelation than our present experience would lead us to anticipate—that uniformity of opinion on all important subjects must be the consequence of examination of the sacred records, unfettered by creeds and human impositions, and will prevail in that happier age when the effects of the gospel shall be fully exhibited, to hasten which is the glorious object which the friends of truth and human happiness now propose to themselves, and, under the direction of an all-wise Providence, is the tendency of the events which seem most contrary.

Great diversity of opinions is the natural, intermediate state between a uniformity produced by ignorance or force, and a uniformity which arises from freedom and knowledge. As such, it will be complained of or distrusted by no wise man. Instead of deploring the number of sects which at present exists, we should labour to break down all the barriers which restrain the free progress of opinions, even though innumerable new and, in our view, erroneous doctrines should immedi-

ately spring up. Conformity produced by prejudice or indifference, interest or force, is a vast stagnant reservoir, uninteresting until springs from beneath swell its surface, and render its waters impatient of restraint. Let but the dams be broken down, and though a thousand foaming torrents or wandering streams may bear away the late imprisoned floods, they will all meet in the deep, clear and gently-rolling river, there to flow along in harmonious union and accordant progress.

Truth, and most especially religious truth, is inseparably connected with every improvement which has taken place in the condition of mankind, and is the only sure foundation of whatever hopes we may entertain of farther progress. It has advanced, and it must advance, with accelerated step. Its path of triumph is marked over the earth. No tyrant's power, no bigot's threats, can check its bright career. Ignorance shall be enlightened, error shall be corrected, vice shall be reformed, and peace and charity shall rule the hearts of men. The Heathen shall rejoice in the light of the Sun of righteousness, and the gross corruptions which have degraded the character, and so greatly restrained the influences of Christianity, shall dissolve like morning mists before the rising orb of day. The prospect is delightful, it is inspiring. Is it but the vain delusion of hope; or is it sure and real as the Land of Promise, when its hills and vales,

rich in every blessing, presented themselves in attractive luxuriance before the eyes of the expiring prophet? Yes, my friends, believe that it is sure, and give yourselves up to the delightful feelings it inspires. The mists which have been kindly spread during ages of ignorance and barbarism as a curtain to shade the weakness of human intellect from a light it could not bear, are scattering around us; but it is not the method of Providence that they should be suddenly dispelled. The light has advanced, gradually indeed, but certainly, and not to perceive its spreading beams may now almost be said to argue the love of darkness. With our opinions we surely have reason to triumph in the progress of religious truth; and if we do not do so, it can only be because our expectations are unreasonable—because we look for the lightning's flash, or the meteor's glare, instead of the sober dawn and the gradual light, shining more and more unto the perfect day. But the lightning flashes from the east unto the west, and it is gone; the meteor careers through the air in momentary splendour, and disappears; unlike the radiant sun of heavenly truth, which, slowly emerging from its morning vapours, and darkened at first by many a cloud, advances with sure and steady progress, brightening as it goes, and every where conveying its blessed influences to the minds and hearts of men.

It only remains for us to consider whether

ours shall be the honour and happiness of being instruments in the hands of Providence for hastening that glorious period, of the approach of which we can already perceive the signs, and the arrival of which we anticipate with the full confidence of faith. I trust there is not one here present who can feel any hesitation on the subject. If we have embraced our own opinions upon examination and conviction, and a reasonable satisfaction of their truth, we must feel ourselves powerfully drawn, both by the love of God and the love of man, to use our best exertions for communicating to others the knowledge which we believe that we have obtained. This is plainly required by the love of God, because he has given religion to man to promote his happiness; if, therefore, we are truly grateful to him for the blessing, and sincerely devoted to his service, we shall think ourselves best employed in forwarding his all-gracious plans, and shall esteem it our proudest distinction to be workers together with him in the accomplishment of his purposes. The love of God also makes us lovers of whatever proceeds from him, because we must always find in it the same characters of purity, holiness and goodness which we admire and adore in him. We cannot, therefore, believe any thing to be truth, without being warmly interested in its being generally known and acknowledged. The love of man should excite us to zeal in the diffusion of truth, because its direct



and constant tendency is to promote human happiness, and not even the smallest particle of it can be entirely useless. Religious truth, above all, is our best guide in the ways of peace here, and our conductor to immortal blessedness hereafter. There is no genuine doctrine of religion which does not cherish pious feelings, awaken holy desires, excite to virtuous actions, or inspire with enlivening hopes or salutary fears; there is none, therefore, which we do not serve our brother by leading him to understand and believe. On the other hand, there is no error on any subject connected with religion which does not cause the Divine character to appear less amiable, damp the ardour of piety, weaken the obligations of morality, restrain the exercise of charity, sour the temper, or cast doubt and gloom over the prospects of futurity—consequently there can be none the removal of which is not a blessing. And can he, then, who listens with pity to the prayer of distress, whose heart melts at the sight of affliction, whose sympathetic tear expresses a brother's interest in a brother's griefs, and whose ready hand administers the relief which lightens human suffering—can he be indifferent to the misery which is the offspring of error? Can he who never refused bread to the hungry, withhold from the craving children of ignorance the living bread of truth? Can he who would be eyes to the blind, refrain from shedding the enlivening rays of divine light upon

the darkened mind? It cannot be. The same feelings which prompt to acts of kindness and beneficence towards those who suffer pain, sorrow and deprivation of worldly blessings, must also awaken in the enlightened mind zeal in the cause of truth, and rouse all its energies to active exertion for its diffusion.

Whilst we believe that there exists in the world ignorance, error, and mental darkness, we can have no pretence for inactivity, nor must our exertions be confined within a narrow sphere. All mankind are our brethren; the world is all before us; and wherever we perceive that we can be useful, there we are called, and it is our duty to act. Where we are satisfied that we can be most useful, is our proper sphere, whether it be at home or abroad, amongst our countrymen and neighbours, or in the remotest regions of the globe. We should never be contented with the course we have already chosen, but be ever on the watch for new opportunities, and anxious to extend our exertions to the utmost extent of our powers.

The Society which here draws us together is one which has the highest possible claims upon us as friends of truth and believers in Unitarian Christianity; and it goes on from year to year increasing its claims, not only by its judicious and well-sustained labours where its usefulness has been already proved, but by extending its objects and enlarging its views. Let it engage

our warmest zeal, unite us together in the closest bonds of brotherhood and harmonious co-operation, and receive our steady and liberal support.

May the Divine favour and blessing attend it! May it prosper and flourish under our care! May it be greatly instrumental in restoring Christianity to its genuine simplicity and diffusing it in its unsullied purity, so that it may contribute to the accomplishment of that glorious purpose of Providence declared in our text, *that all men may be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth!* Amen!

FINIS.

(3)

A  
LETTER  
TO  
LORD VISCOUNT BARRINGTON,  
(WRITTEN IN THE YEAR 1730,)  
CONCERNING THE QUESTION,  
WHETHER THE *LOGOS* SUPPLIED THE PLACE OF A  
HUMAN SOUL IN THE PERSON OF JESUS CHRIST.

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Search the Scriptures. For in them ye think ye have eternal Life. And they are they, which testify of me. *John* v. 39.

Ergo nec Parentum, nec Majorum Error sequendus est: sed Auctoritas Scripturarum, et Dei docentis Imperium. *Hieron. in Jer. cap. ix. ver. 12—14.*

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BY NATHANIEL LARDNER, D.D.

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## ADVERTISEMENT.



THE authority on which the name of the person to whom this Letter was addressed is now, for the first time, placed in the Title-page, is derived from a disclosure made by Dr. Lardner himself, who, writing from Hoxton Square, June 9, 1768, to his correspondent Mr. Wiche of Maidstone\*, says ; “ You once made inquiries concerning the person to whom the Letter in 1730 is addressed. I shall now tell you that Papinian is the late Lord Viscount Barrington, with whom I had an epistolary correspondence, which was then coming to an end. That Letter was one of the last.”

B. M.

\* The letter to Mr. Wiche is in possession of his grandson John Evans, Esq., of Gray's Inn.



## P R E F A C E.

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**THOUGH** the names in this Letter are fictitious, (as they always were, and the same that appear now,) it is part of a real correspondence. Papinian, who was a man of mature age, of great eminence, and a diligent reader of the sacred Scriptures, has long since accomplished his course in this world. Philalethes is still living. The letter, sent to Papinian, was never returned. But Philalethes kept a copy of it. Though written almost thirty years ago, it has hitherto lain concealed in the writer's cabinet. Nor has it, till very lately, been shown to more than two persons, one of whom is deceased. Whether this will be reckoned full proof, that the writer is not forward to engage in religious disputes, I cannot say. This however is certain : He would have great reason to think himself happy, if, with the assist-



ance of others, without noise and disturbance, in the way of free, calm, and peaceable debate, he could clear up a controverted point of religion, to general satisfaction.

If any should ask, *Why is this Letter published now?* I would answer in the words of Solomon, *There is a time to keep silence, and a time to speak.* But whether the present season has been fitly chosen, the event, under the conduct of Divine Providence, will best show.

The reader is desired to take notice, that whatever he sees at the bottom of the pages, is additional. There are also some additions in the Letter itself, especially near the end, where more texts are explained, than were in the original Letter.

For better understanding the argument, it may be needful to observe, for the sake of some, that by divers ancient writers we are assured, it was the opinion of Arius, and his followers: "That \* our Saviour took flesh of Mary, but not a soul:" "That † Christ had flesh only, as a covering for

\* . . . . σαρκα μονον τον σωτηρα απο Μαρίας ειληφεναι, διαβεβαιουμενοι, και ουχι ψυχην.—*Epiiph. de Arianis in Indic. T. i. p. 606.*

Αλλα και αρνουνται ψυχην αυτον ανθρωπινην ειληφεναι.. —*Id. H. 69. n. 19. p. 743. A Conf. n. 48—51.*

† Αρειος δε σαρκα μονην προς αποκρυφην της θεοτητας

his Deity: and that the Word in him was the same, as the soul in us: and that the Word, or the Deity in Christ, was liable to sufferings in the body."

Mr. Whiston, in his *Historical Memoirs of the Life of Dr. Clarke*, giving an account of the Act in the Divinity Schools at Cambridge, in the year 1709, when Mr. Clarke, then Rector of St. James's, received the Doctor's Degree, says, at p. 20, 21. "In the course of this Act, where I was present, Professor James . . . digressed from one of the Doctor's questions, and pressed him hard to condemn one of the opinions, which I had just then published in my *Sermons and Essays*. Which book he held in his hand, when he was in the Chair. I suppose, it might be this: that our Saviour had no human soul, but that the Divine Logos, or Word, supplied its place . . . . . However, Dr. Clarke, who, I believe, had not particularly examined that point, did prudently avoid

ὁμολογεῖ· ἀντὶ δὲ τοῦ ἐνωθεν ἐν ἡμῖν ἀνθρώπου, τούτῳ τῆς ψυχῆς, τὸν λόγον ἐν τῇ σαρκὶ λέγει γεγενῆσθαι. κ. λ. *Athan. Contr. Apollin. l. 2. n. 3. p. 942.*

"In eo autem quod Christum sine anima solam carnem suscepisse arbitrantur, minus noti sunt . . . sed hoc verum esse, et Epiphanius non tacuit, et ego ex eorum quibusdam scriptis et colloctionibus certissime inveni."—*August. de Her. c. 49.*

either the approbation or condemnation of it. Yet have I reason to believe, he long afterwards came into it, upon a further examination : though, I think, he ever avoided, according to his usual caution, to declare publicly that his approbation, even upon the most pressing applications. Which is one great instance of that *impenetrable secrecy*, which Dr. Sykes justly notes to have been in him, upon many occasions."

So Mr. Whiston, who clearly declares his own opinion. Who likewise supposeth, that the same was for some while received by Dr. Clarke. But he seems not to have had any certain evidence of it. For, as he acknowledges, *Dr. Clarke never publicly declared his approbation of it.*

Nevertheless, it may not be disagreeable to see here what Dr. Clarke himself says in his *Scripture Doctrine of the Trinity*, Part i. ch. iii. numb. 998. p. 197. "Matth. iv. 1. *Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness.* From this, and many other of the following texts, it seems, that the Logos, the Divine Nature of Christ, did so far *κενώσει éαυτον*, diminish itself, as St. Paul expresses it, Philipp. ii. 7. that, during the time of his incarnation, he was all along under the conduct of the Holy Spirit."

And Part ii. sect. xxviii. p. 301. "The Holy Spirit is described in the New Testament, as the immediate author and worker of all miracles, even of those done by our Lord himself: and as the conductor of Christ in all the actions of his life, during his state of humiliation here on earth."

Before I finish this preface, I must make some citations from Dr. Robert Clayton, late Lord Bishop of Clogher, who in the third part of his Vindication of the Histories of the Old and New Testament, has expressed himself after this manner. Letter v. p. 80. 81, or p. 443. "*He who had glory with the Father, before the world was, emptied himself, or divested himself of that glory, in order to redeem mankind, and descended from heaven, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made man.* That is, He, who was a glorified pre-existent spirit in the presence of God, submitted to descend from heaven, and to have himself conveyed by the wonderful power of Almighty God, into the womb of a Virgin. Where, being clothed with flesh, and ripening by degrees to manhood, he was at length brought forth into the world, in the same apparent state and condition with other human infants."

Again, Letter vii. p. 132. 133. or 482. 483: "And accordingly this exalted spirit was, by the

wonderful power of God, as before related, conveyed into the womb of the Virgin Mary, and was made man; that is, was made as much so, as his mother could make him, without being impregnated by man. And now being deprived of the immediate presence of God the Father, and being shut up in darkness, and the shadow of death, he was after nine months brought forth into life, in the form of a feeble infant, with all the weakness, and frailties, and infirmities of human nature about him. And as he grew up into life, and his reason improved, this only served to make the terrible change and alteration of his condition so much the more perceptible, and the recollection of it so much the more grievous and insufferable. The dreadfulness of which state is hardly conceivable to us, because that we never were sensible of anything better than our present existence. But for any being, which had ever enjoyed the happiness of heaven, and had been in possession of *glory with the Father*, to be deprived thereof, and to be sent to dwell here in this world, encompassed within the narrow limits of this earthly tabernacle, and the heavy organs made of flesh and blood, it must, literally speaking, be to such a being, an hell upon earth." So says that celebrated writer.

To the Letter are now added two Postscripts. Concerning which nothing needs to be said here. They who look into them, will see what they are.

One thing the author would say. He hopes, the whole is written in the way of reason and argument, with meekness and candour, without acrimony and abuse: though not without a just concern for such things as appear to him to be of importance.

Feb. 12, 1759.

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[In order to give extended circulation to the LETTER, the two Postscripts are omitted in this edition; but it is right to say, that the First contains an Explication of those Words, *the Spirit, the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of God*, as used in the Scriptures. The Second contains, Remarks upon the third Part of the Bishop of CLOGHER's Vindication of the Histories of the Old and New Testament.—See Pref. p. ix.]



# A LETTER,

&c.

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*To PAPINIAN.*

**Y**OU have, it seems, heard of the correspondence between Eugenius and Phileleutherus, and particularly of an incidental question concerning the Arian hypothesis. You have been informed likewise, that I am well acquainted with this correspondence. And, as it has excited your curiosity, you demand of me an account of it, and also my own opinion upon the point in debate.

If it were proper for me to deny you anything, I should entirely excuse myself, and be perfectly silent: being apprehensive, that touching upon a subject of so much niceness and difficulty may occasion some trouble to yourself as well as to me. But you are determined not to accept of any excuses.

I must then, without further preamble, declare to you, that I cannot but take the same



side of the question with Phileleutherus; though once, for some while, I was much inclined to the other.

However, whilst I was favourable to the supposition that the Logos was the soul of our Saviour, I was embarrassed with a very considerable difficulty. For the Scriptures do plainly represent our blessed Saviour exalted to power and glory, as a reward of his sufferings here on earth. But I was at a loss to conceive, how that high being, *the first, and only immediate derived being, by whom God made the world\**, should gain any

\* Dr. Clarke, *Scripture-Doctrine*, &c. P. 1. num. 535. p. 86. "The third interpretation is, that *the Word* is a person, deriving from the Father (with whom he existed before the world was,) both his being itself, and incomprehensible power and knowledge, and other divine attributes and authority, in a manner not revealed, and which human wisdom ought not to presume to explain."

*Ib.* Part 2. p. 242. § ii. "With this first and supreme cause, and Father of all things, there has existed, from the beginning, a second Divine Person, which is his Word or Son."

Page 297. § xxvi. "By the operation of the Son, the Father both made and governs the world."

Page 298. § xxvii. "Concerning the Son, there are other things spoken in Scripture, and the highest titles are ascribed to him, even such as include all divine powers, excepting absolute independency and supremacy."

A part of Mr. Peirce's Paraphrase upon Col. i. 15. 16. is in these words: "...and since he was the first being that was derived from the Father. And that he must be the first derived from Him, is hence evident, that all other beings were derived from God, the primary and supreme cause of all, through his Son, by whom, as their immediate Author, all things were created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible," &c.

exaltation by receiving, after his resurrection and ascension, a bright resplendent human body, and being made the King and Lord of all good men in this world, and the judge of mankind, and, if you please to add likewise, being made higher than the angels, to whom, according to the same hypothesis, he was vastly superior before.

But to speak my mind freely, I now entirely dislike that scheme, and think it all amazing throughout, and irreconcilable to reason.

However, that we may not take up any prejudices from apprehensions which our own reason might afford, I shall suspend all inquiries of that sort, and will immediately enter upon the consideration of what the Scriptures say of the person of our Saviour.

He is called a *man* in many places of the Gospels. And everybody took him for a man, during his abode on this earth, when he conversed with all sorts of people, in the most free and open manner. He frequently styles himself *the Son of man*. He is also said to be *the son of David*, and *the son of Abraham*. He is called a man, even after his ascension. Acts xvii. 31. *He has appointed a day, in which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained.* 1 Tim. ii. 5. *For there is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.* And St. Peter to the Jews at Jerusalem: Acts ii. 22. *Ye men of Israel, hear these words, Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you*

*by miracles, and wonders, and signs, which God did by him, in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know.*

Now if Jesus Christ be a man, he consists of a human soul and body. For what else is a man?

This title and appellation of *man* being so often and so plainly given to our Saviour, must needs lead us to think, that he was properly man, unless there are some expressions of another kind, that are decisive to the contrary. But we find, that he is not only called a man, but is also said to be a man as we are, or like to us. *Hebr. ii. 17. Therefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren. iv. 15. We have not an High-Priest which cannot be touched with a feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.* And see the second chapter of that epistle throughout.

Beside these plain expressions, describing our Lord to be a man, and like to us, this point may be argued from a great number and variety of particulars related in the New Testament. For two Evangelists have recorded our Lord's nativity. St. Paul says: *God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law. Gal. iv. 4.* If it was expedient that our Saviour should be born into the world, as we are, and live in infancy, and grow up to manhood, as we do, and be liable to all the bodily wants, weaknesses, and disasters, to which we are exposed; must it not have been as needful, or more needful, and as conformable

to the divine wisdom, that he should be also like unto us in the other part of which we are composed, a human soul, or spirit\*.

Moreover, this supposition does best, if not only, account for our blessed Saviour's temptation, and every part of it. For how was it possible that he should be under any temptation, to try the love of God to him, by turning stones into bread, or by casting himself down from a pinnacle of the temple? How could all the glories of this world, and the kingdoms of it, be any temp-

\* " And when we say, that person was *conceived and born*; we declare, he was made really and truly man, of the same human nature which is in all other men.—*For the Mediator between God and men is the man Christ Jesus.* 1 Tim. ii. 5. *That since by man came death, by man also should come the resurrection of the dead.* 1 Cor. xv. 21. As sure, then, as the first Adam, and we who are redeemed, are men; so certainly is the second Adam, and our Mediator, man. He is therefore frequently called *the Son of man*, and in that nature he was always promised: first to Eve, as her seed, and consequently, her son: then to Abraham. And that seed is Christ. Gal. iii. 16. and so the son of Abraham: next to David, . . . and consequently, of the same nature with David and Abraham. And as he was their son, so are we his brethren, as descendants from the same father Adam. *And therefore it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren.* *For he laid not hold on the angels, but on the seed of Abraham.* Hebr. ii. 16. 17. And so became not an angel, but a man.

" As then man consisteth of two different parts, body and soul, so does Christ. . . . And certainly, if the Son of God would vouchsafe to take the frailty of our flesh, he would not omit the nobler part, *our soul*, without which he could not be man. *For Jesus increased in wisdom, and stature*: one in respect of his body, the other of his soul. Luke ii. 52." *Pearson upon the Creed.* Art. iii. p. 159. 160. the fourth edition. 1676.

tation to him, who had made all things under the Supreme Being? Had he forgot the glory and power which he once had? If that could be supposed, and that this want of memory of past things still remained; it might be as well supposed that he had no remembrance of the orders which he had received from God, and of the commission with which God the Father had sent him into the world.

The supposition, of Christ being a man, does also best account for his agony in the garden\*,

\* Luke xxii. 44. *And being in an agonie.* . . . *Και γενομενος εν αγωνια.*] I would put the question, whether it might not be thus translated? *And being under great concern.* I will transcribe here a passage of an ancient writer, representing the anxiety, or solicitude, of Julius Cesar, and others, when Octavius Cesar, then a young man, had a dangerous sickness. *Χαλεπως δε διακειμενου, παντες μεν εν φοβῳ ησαν, αγωνιωντες ει τι πεισεται τοιαυτη φυσις, μαλιστα δε παντων ο Καισαρ. Διο πασαν ημεραν η αυτος παρων αυτω ευθυμιαν παρειχεν, η φιλους πεμπων, ιατρους τε αποστατειν ουκ εων. Και ποτε δειπνωντι ηγγειλε τις, ως εκλυτος ειη, και χαλεπως εχοι. Ο δε εκπηδησας ανηποδητος ηκεν ενθα ενοσηλευετο, και των ιατρων εδειτο εμπαθεστατα μεστος ων αγωνιας, και αυτος παρεκαθητο. κ. λ. Nic. Damascen. De Institutione Cesaris Augusti Ap. Vales. Excerpta. p. 841.*

I have observed, that some learned men seem studiously to have avoided the word *agonie* in their translations. In the Latin Vulgate is: "Et factus in agonia." But Beza translates, "Et constitutus in angore." Le Clerc's French version is: "Et comme il étoit dans une extrême inquietude" . . . And L'Enfant's: "Et comme il étoit dans un grand combat." . . . Which last I do not think to be right. For the original word is not *αγων* but *αγωνια*., The Syriac version, as translated into Latin by Tremellius, Trostius, and others, is: "Cum esset in timore, instanter orabat." I shall add a short

and the dark, yet glorious scene of his sufferings on the cross, and the concluding prayer there : *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?*

And the making the Logos to be the soul of Christ, does really annihilate his example, and enervate all the force which it should have upon us.

But it may be said, that there are some texts which lead us to think that Jesus Christ had a human body, but not a human soul : particularly, John i. 14. and Hebr. x. 5.

John i. 14. *And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us.* But it should be observed, that *flesh*, in the scriptures both in the Old and New Testament, is oftentimes equivalent to *man*. Ps. lvi. 5. *I will not fear what flesh can do unto me.* Ver. 11. *I will not fear what man can do unto me.* And in innumerable other places. And in the New Testament, Matth. xiii. 20. Luke iii. 6. John xvii. 2. Acts ii. 17. 1 Pet. i. 24.

What St. John says therefore is this : *And the word was made flesh*, or took upon him the human nature\*.

St. John says 1 Ep. iv. 2. 3. *Every spirit*

passage from *V. H. Vogleri Physiologia Historiæ Passionis* J. C. cap. 2. p. 4. "Ideoque non immerito dici potest *αγωνία* (quam in defectu commodioris vocabuli *angorem* Latine vocemus) promptitudo rem quampiam aggrediundi, sed cum timore et trepidatione."

\* "He took upon him our human nature, became himself a man, subject to the like frailties with us, and lived and conversed freely amongst men." *Dr. Clarke's Paraphrase of St. John* i. 14. the fourth edition. 1722.

*that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God. See likewise 2 Ep. ver. 7.*

It is well known, that in the early days of Christianity, particularly in Asia, where St. John resided, there arose people, generally called *Docetæ*, who denied the real humanity of Christ, and said he was a man in appearance only. These St. John opposeth in his Epistles, if not in his Gospel also. Against them he here asserts, that Jesus had the innocent infirmities of the human nature, and that he really suffered, and died. But when he says that *Jesus Christ came in the flesh*, he does not deny that he had a human soul, or was man completely. Indeed, it is here implied that he was man, as we are\*.

Hebr. x. 5. *Wherefore, when he cometh into*

\* “ Ecce in quibus verbis suis omnino manifestant negare se, quod ad unitatem personæ Christi etiam humana anima pertineat; sed in Christo carnem et divinitatem tantummodo confiteri. Quandoquidem cum penderet in ligno, illud, ubi ait, *Pater, in manus tuas commendo spiritum meum*, divinitatem ipsam volunt eum intelligi commendasse Patri, non humanum spiritum, quod est anima. . . Et his atque hujusmodi sanctarum scripturarum testimoniis non resistant, fateanturque Christum, non tantum carnem, sed animam quoque humanam Verbo unigenito coaptasse. . . Aut si eo moventur quod scriptum est, *Verbum caro factum est*, nec illic anima nominata est: intelligant, carnem pro homine positam, a parte totum significante locutionis modo, sicuti est, *Ad te omnis caro veniet*. Item, *Ex operibus legis non justificabitur omnis caro*. Quod apertius alio loco dixit: *Ex lege nemo justificabitur*. Itemque alio: *Non justificatur homo*

*the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldst not, but a body hast thou prepared me.*

But it is reasonable to think, that\* a part is here put for the whole, and that the word *body* is not to be understood exclusively of the soul. St. Paul writes to the Romans: *I beseech you, therefore, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice to God.* ch. xii. 1. But no one ought hence to conclude, that the Romans had not souls as well as bodies, or that their souls might be neglected. No. The faculties of the mind, as well as the members of the body, were to be consecrated to God, and employed in his service. At the beginning of the next chapter St. Paul says: *Let every soul be subject to the higher powers:—* where the other part of the human nature is put for the whole.

And it is manifest from ch. ii. 16—18. and other places, that the writer of the Epistle to the

*ex operibus.* Sic itaque dictum est, *verbum caro factum est*: acsi diceretur, Verbum homo factum est. Veruntamen isti, cum ejus solam humanam carnem velint intelligi hominem Christum, non enim negabunt hominem, de quo apertissime dicitur, unus mediator Dei et hominum homo Christus Jesus," &c. *Aug. contr. Sermon. Arian.* cap. ix. tom. viii.

\* "*A body* here is a synecdochical expression of the human nature of Christ. So is *flesh* taken, when he is said to be *made flesh*. For the general end of his having *this body* was, that he might therein and thereby yield obedience, or do the will of God. And the especial end of it was, that he might have *what to offer* in sacrifice to God. But neither of these can be confined unto his body alone. For it is the soul, the other essential part of the human nature, that is the principle of obedience." *Dr. J. Owen upon Hebr.* x. 5. p. 29.



Hebrews believed Christ to be man, or to have the human nature complete, like unto us. It would therefore be very unreasonable to understand *body* in this place exclusively of the soul.

The words of the apostle are a quotation from Ps. xl. prophetically representing the readiness of Christ to do the will of God in this world.

*Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith.* "Which\* words are capable of two interpretations. They may relate to our Lord's nativity, when he literally entered into the world. Or they may relate to the entrance upon his ministry. Then it was, *that the Father sanctified him, and sent him into the world.* John x. 36. and xvii. 18. And then it was that he devoted himself to God entirely. Nor can it be well doubted, that the prayer, which Jesus made, when he was baptized and received the Spirit, which is mentioned Luke iii. 31. contained a declaration equivalent to that in this place: *Lo, I come to do thy will, O God.* Compare John v. 30. and vi. 38."

I will now consider some texts which have been thought by some to represent to us the pre-existence of the soul of our Saviour, before his conception in the womb of the virgin Mary.

*The form of God*, Philip. ii. 6. seems to me to have been enjoyed by our Lord in this world. It †

\* See Beausobre upon Heb. x. 5.

† "*Μορφή, forma*, in nostris libris non significat æternum et occultum aliquid, sed id quod in oculos incurrit, qualis erat eximia in Christo potestas sanandi morbos omnes, eji-

denotes his knowledge of the hearts of men, his power of healing diseases, and raising the dead, and working other miracles, at all times, whenever he pleased; and all the other evidences of his divine mission. This sense does wonderfully accord with what our Lord says, John x. 34—36. and in many other places of that Gospel. *Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are Gods? If he called them Gods, to whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken; say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God?* But though he had so great power, *he made himself of no reputation*: he lived in a mean condition, and submitted to the reproaches of enemies, and at last to death itself. Which was plainly a voluntary submission: for being innocent, he needed not to have died, but might have been translated without tasting death.

If this be the meaning of the text, then 2 Cor. vii. 9. is also explained: that *\* though he was rich, yet for our sakes he became poor.*

John i. 15. *John bare witness of him . . . He that cometh after me is preferred before me.* And

ciendi dæmones, excitandi mortuos, mutandi rerum naturas: quæ vere divina sunt, ita ut Moses, qui tam magna non fecit, dictus ob id fuerit Deus Pharaonis." *Grot. in Philip. ii. 6.*

\* "Id est, cum vi polleret omnis generis miracula patrandi, etiam mortuos resuscitandi, personam tamen gessit tam humilem, ut ne domum quidem haberet propriam." *Grot. in loc.*

ver. 30. *This is he of whom I said, After me cometh a man which is preferred before me: for he was before me.* But I apprehend that John the Baptist does not here say, that Jesus was before him in time. But he says: "He who comes after me, has always been before me, or in my view: for he is my chief, or prince, or principal." This suits what he says of the great dignity and transcendent excellence of our Lord's person and character, at ver. 27. *Whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose:* and ver. 23. *I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord:* that is, "I am the harbinger, or forerunner, of the great person who is about to appear among you." "I am come before him to prepare for his reception."

John viii. 58. may be thought a strong text for the pre-existence of our Saviour's soul. But really he there only represents his dignity, as the Messiah, the special favour of God toward him, and the importance of the dispensation by him. It is a way of speaking resembling that in Rev. xiii. 8. *Whose names are written in the book of life, of the lamb, slain from the foundation of the world;* and explained 1 Pet. i. 20. *Who verily was fore-ordained before the foundation of the world* \*. See also Eph. i. 4. 2 Tim. i. 9. Tit.

\* "Fuerat ante Abrahamum Jesus divina constitutione: infra xvii. 5. Apoc. xiii. 8. 1 Pet. i. 20. Constat hoc, quia de ipso ipsiusque Ecclesiâ mystice dictum erat, recente humano genere, futurum, ut semen muliebri contereretur caput serpentis." *Grot. in Joh. viii. 58. Vid. et Bex. in loc.*

i. 2. The Jewish people have a saying, that\* the Law was before the world was created. In like manner the dispensation by the Messiah was before the dispensation of Abraham, in dignity, nature, and design, though not in time.

The Jews were much offended at the words recorded in the 56th verse. Nevertheless our Lord does not there say that he had seen Abraham, or that Abraham had seen him, in person. What he says is this: *Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad:* that is, "he earnestly desired to see the time when all the nations of the earth should be blessed, through his promised seed, the Messiah. And *by faith he saw it, and was glad.*" Compare Hebr. xi. 13. †

Another text proper to be considered here is John xvii. 5. *And now, O Father, glorify thou me with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.* But this, according to the Jewish phraseology, may be very well understood of

\* "Sic Legem fuisse ante mundum, aiunt Hebræi. Vide Thalmudem de Votis." *Grot. ad Joh. xvii. 5.*

† "Ceterum, ex Hebræorum idiotismo, *dies alicujus* nihil aliud declarat, quam spatium quo vixerit aliquis, aut insigne quidpiam, quod ipsi vel facere vel ferre contigit. Quæ res notior est, quam ut testimonio egeat. *Dies ergo Domini* nihil aliud significat, quam ipsius adventum in carnem. Vidit enim eum eminus Abraham, fidei nimirum oculis, ut declaratur Hebr. xi. 13. . . *Ac gavisus est,* . . . Respicit autem expresse Christus ad id quod dicitur. Gen. xvii. 17. Abrahamum, accepta de nascituro sibi illo semine promissione, sese prostravisse, et risisse. Unde et ipsi Isaaco nomen imposuit Dominus." *Bez. ad Joh. viii. 56.*

the glory always designed for the Christ by the immutable purpose of God. See Grotius upon the place. That our Lord had not, before his nativity, the glory which he here prays for, is apparent from the whole tenour of the Gospel, and from clear and manifest expressions in the context. For the glory which he now prays for, is the reward of his obedience: ver. 4. *I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. And now, O Father, glorify thou me . . .* And St. Paul says, Phil. ii. 9. *Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him. Heb. ii. 9. . . . for the suffering of death he was crowned with glory and honour. Ver. 10. For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. And Hebr. xii. 2. Looking unto Jesus; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame: and is set down on the right hand of the throne of God. And Luke xxiv. 26.* our Saviour says to his disciples, in the way to Emmaus: *Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?* And St. Peter, 1 Ep. i. 10. 11. *Of which salvation the Prophets have inquired . . . Searching what, or what manner of time the spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. And St. Paul, Acts xxvi. 22. 23. . . saying no other things than those, which the Prophets and Moses did say should come: that the*

*Christ should suffer, and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead.* All harmonious, as we see, that the glory of the Messiah was subsequent to his obedience and sufferings on this earth. See likewise Rom. i. 3. 4.

Nor can I forbear to observe to you, that Augustin, who has largely considered the words of John xvii. 5. and in so doing, quotes Eph. i. 4. and Rom. i. 1—4. understands them of Christ's human nature, and explains them in the same manner that I have done. "*Quasi vero quisquam regulam fidei intuens, Filium Dei negaturus est prædestinatum, qui eum negare hominem non potest. Recte quippe dicitur non prædestinatus secundum id quod est Verbum Dei, Deus apud Deum. . . . Illud autem prædestinandum erat, quod nondum erat, ut suo tempore fieret, quemadmodum ante omnia tempora prædestinatum erat, ut fieret. Quisquis igitur Dei Filium prædestinatum negat, hunc eundem filium hominis negat . . . secundum hanc ergo prædestinationem etiam clarificatus est antequam mundus esset, ut esset claritas ejus ex resurrectione mortuorum apud Patrem, ad cujus dextram sedet. Cum ergo videret illius prædestinatæ suæ clarificationis venisse jam tempus, ut et nunc fieret in redditione, quod fuerat in prædestinatione jam factum, oravit, dicens: *Et nunc clarifica me tu Pater apud te ipsum, claritate, quam habui priusquam mundus esset, apud te:* tanquam diceret, Claritatem quam habui apud te, id est, illam claritatem, quam habui apud te in prædestinatione tuâ, tempus est,*

ut apud te habeam etiam vivens in dextrâ tuâ." *August. In Joan. Evang. cap. 17. Tr. cv. n. 8. ed. Bened. tom. 3. p. 2.*

It has been thought by some\*, that Christ, or the Son, appeared to the Patriarchs, and was oftentimes sent upon messages to men by the Supreme Being, before the times of the Gospel. But where is the proof of this? It was the opinion of some of the ancient writers of the Church, who had a philosophy that was a mixture of Pythagorism and Platonism. Nevertheless, this supposition, that God had employed the Son in former times, before the Gospel, is overthrown by the very first words of the Apostle in the Epistle to the Hebrews. *God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the Prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son.* It is also inconsistent with the Apostle's arguments to care and circumspection, steadfastness and perseverance, which follow afterwards, *Hebr. ii. 1. 2. 3. Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard . . . For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast . . . how shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him?* See likewise *ch. iii. 3. For this man was counted worthy of more honour than Moses . . . ver. 6.* But Christ, as a Son over his own house.

\* That opinion is modestly rejected by Mr. Peirce in his Paraphrase on the Epistle to the Hebrews; chap. i. ver. 2.

Still it may be said, that nothing but the pre-existence of the soul of Christ can suit those expressions of his being *sent from God*, and *coming from God*.

To which I answer, that the account here given by me is well suited to all such expressions in their utmost latitude, according to the style of Scripture. For we may be all said to be sent by God into the world, without the supposition of a pre-existent soul. Especially are Prophets sent from God. But above all, Jesus is most properly *the sent of God*, as he had the highest and most important commission.

St. John i. 6. *There was a man sent from God, whose name was John*. Nevertheless none suppose that John the Baptist came directly from heaven: but only, that he was inspired, and had a divine command to appear in the world, and bear witness concerning the Christ, who would come presently after him.

And the commission which our Lord gave to his Apostles is expressed by himself after this manner, John xvii. 18. *As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I sent them into the world*. And xx. 21. *As my Father hath sent me, so send I you*.

But, as before said, Jesus is *the sent of God*, as he had the highest commission. John iii. 34. *He whom God hath sent, speaketh the words of God*. Ch. iv. 34. *My meat is to do the will of him that sent me*. Ch. v. 38. *Ye have not his word abiding in you. For whom he hath sent, ye believe*



*not.* See also ver. 23. 24. 30. 34. 36. And x. 36. *Say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God?* And in the history of the cure of the blind man, recorded in the ixth chapter of the same Gospel, at ver. 7 . . . *and said unto him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam, which is by interpretation, Sent.* Probably here is an allusion to our Lord's character, as *the sent of God*. And there may be an intimation intended, that he is the Shiloh, spoken of in Gen. xlix. 10.

There are some other texts needful to be taken notice of here. John xiii. 3. *Jesus knowing that he was come from God, and went to God.* ὅτι ἀπο Θεοῦ ἐξηλθε. xvi. 27. *For the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God; ὅτι ἐγὼ παρὰ τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐξηλθον.* ver. 28. *I am come forth from the Father, and am come into the world. Again, I leave the world, and go to the Father.* Εἰξηλθον παρὰ τοῦ πατρὸς. This expression is explained in chap. viii. 42. Whence we perceive, that\* thereby is intended our Lord's Divine commission. *Jesus said unto them: If God were your Father, ye would love me. For I proceeded forth, and came from God. Neither came I of myself, but he sent me.* Εγὼ γὰρ ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ ἐξηλθον, καὶ ἤκω. κ. λ.

The reproaches and contradictions which our Lord met with, and the sufferings of his death,

\* "Voyez cette façon de parler expliquée ci dessus, ch. viii. 42. par la mission." *L'Enfant upon John* xvi. 27.

are often set before us. But if the Logos, that high and exalted spirit, in the Arian sense, was the soul of Christ; this part of his humiliation, in clothing himself with a human body, would have been frequently represented, and described, in the clearest and most emphatical expressions.

Here, if I mistake not, is a proper place for setting down those observations upon this scheme, which reason may suggest, and were passed over before.

In the first place, I do not apprehend it possible that so glorious and perfect a spirit should undergo such diminution, by being united to a human body, as to become thereby unconscious, or to be greatly enfeebled. I think, that if this spirit were to animate, and take upon it the part of a soul in a human body, its power, cogitation, and knowledge, would subsist and remain, even in its infant state. In short, the human body would be swallowed up by this great soul. That soul would exert itself in the body, and sustain it with all facility, without rest, food, or any other refreshment, against all pain, and uneasiness, and every kind of infirmity. This, I say, would be the case, supposing so great a being to take upon it a human body. If an angel (as is supposed,) can move with agility a material vehicle, made dense enough to be sensible to human eyes; what influence would not this powerful Logos have over the grossest human body? But this is not agreeable to fact, as represented in the New Testament.

For there Jesus is said to have *increased in wisdom*, as he grew up. And he had hunger, and thirst, and was *wearied with journeying*, and had all the sinless infirmities of the human nature, and was subject to death.

But, secondly, supposing this humiliation to be possible, I think it could not be reasonable. It is not reasonable that so great a being should submit to unconsciousness, or any such-like debilitation. Consequently, it cannot be required by God. It is incongruous to all just notions of things, that any other spirit, beside a human soul, should be made subject to the infirmities of human flesh.

I forbear mentioning some things which appear to me consequences from the Logos (in the Arian sense of that term,) being the soul of our blessed Saviour. And, as they are not mentioned, they need not affect you, unless they should occur to your thoughts.

I now proceed to the introduction to St. John's Gospel. For I believe you may be of opinion that I must not pass it by entirely, notwithstanding its difficulty. I will therefore explain it briefly, or a part of it at least, according to the best of my ability; still willing, however, to receive further light from any one that shall afford it.

*In the beginning was the Word.* By *beginning*, I think, cannot be intended the beginning of the Gospel, but of the creation, or rather always, from eternity *was the Word.* And *the Word was with*

*God*: that is, was always with God, though not fully manifested till these last days of the world \*. *And the Word was God.* Καὶ Θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος. Which sometimes has been rendered thus: *And God was the Word.* But there are learned men who say, that then the Greek would have been Καὶ ὁ Θεὸς ἦν λόγος: and, that the article being joined with λόγος, therefore that is the antecedent, and our translation is right.

Here I had been wont to submit to what Dr. Clarke says, *The Scripture-Doctrine of the Trinity*, P. i. numb. 535. "Of these words there are only three interpretations. The first is, that the Word was that same person whom he was with. And that is both a contradiction in terms, and also the ancient heresy of Sabellius." But now that does not move me. I am of opinion, that *God* here is the same God that was mentioned before. St. John useth a gradation. First he says, *the Word was* always, before all time. Then he adds: *and was with God*: and lastly, that he *was God* himself. What follows confirms this interpretation: ver. 3. *All things were made by him, and without him was not any thing made that was made.* Who should this be, but God the Father, the one living and true God, and author of life, and all being? Are there more Creators than one? Would

\* 1 John i. 2. *For the Life was manifested. And we have seen it, and bear witness, and show unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us.*

1 Tim. iii. 16. *And without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness. God was manifest in the flesh.*

any Jew, or disciple of Jesus, ascribe\* the creation of the world to any, but God, or his reason, or understanding, or discretion, his wisdom, his power, his word, his spirit, which is the same as God himself? Ver. 10. *He was in the world, and the world was made by him.* This needs no comment. Ver. 11. *He came to his own, and his own received him not.* I pray, whose people were the Jews, but God's, his, who styled himself Jehovah? He now came, in Jesus, to his own people. But they received him not.

St. John therefore intends the one true God, not any inferior deity.

Shall I show this more particularly from other places of his Gospel? It is observable, that St. John, out of the many discourses of Jesus, (a great part of which he has omitted, as appears from ch. xx. 30. 31. xxi. 25.) has selected those in which our Lord speaks very expressly of the commission which he had received from the Father, and of his near and intimate union with him.

In all the Gospels our Saviour ascribes his miracles to the Father, particularly in Luke xi. 20. and Matt. xii. 28. And the people do the same. *And when the multitudes saw it, they marvelled,*

\* The creation of the world is always ascribed to the one living and true God, in the Old and New Testament. Gen. i. Ex. xxii. Job xxi. 13. xxvi. 13. Ps. xxxiii. 6. cxxxvi. 5—10. cxlvi. 5. 6. Is. xlii. 5. xlv. 12. li. 13. Jer. x. 12. li. 15. and elsewhere. Acts iv. 24. xiv. 15. xvii. 24. Rev. iv. 8—11. x. 6. xiv. 7.

*and glorified God, which had given such power to men. Matt. ix. 8.*

But in none of the Gospels is this done so frequently, and so expressly, as in St. John's: ch. v. 9. *The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do:* and onward to ver. 27. and ver. 30—32, and ver. 36. 37. Ch. viii. 18. *The Father that hath sent me, beareth witness of me. Ver. 28, 29. When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am he, and that I do nothing of myself; but that as the Father hath taught me, I speak these things. And he that sent me, is with me. The Father hath not left me alone; for I do always the things that please him. Ver. 42. For I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me. Ver. 54. It is my Father that honoureth me; of whom ye say, that he is your God. Ch. x. 25. The works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me. Ver. 29. 30. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all. And no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. I and my Father are one.*

This appears also in the discourses of others, recorded in this Gospel. Ch. iii. 2. Nicodemus says, *Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God. For no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him. And ch. ix. 30. Herein is a marvellous thing, that ye know not whence he is. And yet he hath opened my eyes. Ver. 33. If this man were not of God, he could do nothing.*

All these texts seem to me sufficient to satisfy

us, that by *the Word*, which, St. John says, *was in the beginning, and was with God, and was God*, he does not mean a being separate from God, and inferior to him, but God himself, or the wisdom and power of God, which is the same as God, even the Father, who alone is God, nor is there any other.

If by the *Word*, in the introduction to his Gospel, St. John had intended a being separate from God, and inferior to him; it is reasonable to expect that he should be mentioned again afterwards. But nothing of that kind appears. He speaks indeed of *the Son*, and *the only-begotten Son of God*. But thereby is not meant *the Word*, but the man Jesus, the Messiah, in whom *the Word*, that is, the power and wisdom of God, resided.

I now therefore proceed. Ver. 14. *And the Word was made flesh*, and dwelt among us: that is, as before shown, “And the word was made man, or took upon him the human nature.” *And we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.* That is, “And we beheld in Jesus such power and wisdom, that we could not doubt his being the Messiah.” That St. John intends the Lord Jesus, is evident from what he adds in the 15th verse. *John bare witness of him, and cried, saying, This is he of whom I spake. He that cometh after me, is preferred before me.*

*And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us. And we beheld his glory, the glory as of the*

*only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.* This is the same which, in other words, is said in divers texts of the New Testament. Matth. i. 20—23. *And she shall bring forth a Son. And thou shalt call his name Jesus. . . . Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the Prophet, saying: Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and shall bring forth a Son. And they shall call his name Emmanuel, which is, God with us.* And John iii. 34. 35. *For he whom God hath sent, speaketh the words of God. For God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him. The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand.* Col. i. 19. *For it pleased the Father, that in him should all fullness dwell.* And ch. ii. *In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.* And ver. 19. *For in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.*

*And we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father.* As before hinted, it was not *the Word*, which St. John and others beheld, but Jesus, in whom the Word dwelled. Him they beheld. And his greatness was conspicuous: so that he appeared, and they knew him, to be *the only-begotten of the Father*, or the Messiah.

*Only-begotten Son.* The same phrase is again in John iii. 16. and 18. in our Lord's conference with Nicodemus. *Only-begotten*, and *well-beloved Son*, are equivalent. This last is the phrase in several texts: as Matth. iii. 17. Mark i. 11. Luke iii. 22. Matth. xvii. 5. Mark ix. 7. Luke ix. 35. So Prov. iv. 3. *For I was my Father's son, tender,*



*and only-beloved in the sight of my mother.* Comp. 1 Chron. xxix. 1.

*The Christ, or the Messiah, and the Son of God,* are equivalent in the New Testament. Matth. xvi. 16. Peter's applauded confession of our Lord's character is in these words: *Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.* So likewise John vi. 69. But in Mark viii. 29. it is: *Thou art the Christ of God.* And Luke ix. 20. *the Christ of God.*

And that in the language of the Jews the titles of *Messiah* and *Son of God* are the same, may be seen in Matth. xxvi. 63. and Luke xxii. 66. 70. But now I shall argue it more particularly from St. John's Gospel, ch. i. 34—49. John the Baptist bears testimony to Jesus under several characters, all equivalent to that of the Messiah. *And I saw, says he, and bare record, that this is the Son of God. Again, the next day after John stood, and two of his disciples. And looking upon Jesus, as he walked, he saith: Behold the Lamb of God.* These disciples are convinced . . . . *one of them, which heard John, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him: We have found the Messias. . . . Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him: We have found him, of whom Moses in the Law and the Prophets did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.* Nathanael likewise, after some hesitation, is convinced, and makes a like profession, saying: *Rabbi, thou art the Son of God, thou art the King of Israel.*

All these pious men, acquainted with the scriptures of the Old Testament, upon the ground of John's testimony, and their own conversation with Jesus, under somewhat different appellations, but of one and the same meaning, acknowledge Jesus to be the Christ. See also John ix. 35. 36. and 1 John v. 1. 5.

The Jews, it is likely, had learned this title and character of the Messiah from Ps. ii. 7. 12. And see 2 Sam. vii. 14.

When Jesus was baptized, he was solemnly and publicly declared to be the Messiah. *There came a voice from Heaven, saying : This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.* After which, having been led up of the Spirit into the wilderness, the tempter, when he came to him, said : *If thou be the Son of God*, that is, if indeed thou art *the Son of God\**, or the Christ, *command that these stones be made bread.*

I would now endeavour to show upon what accounts Jesus is in the Scriptures said to be *the Son of God*.

Sonship is a term of nearness, dearness, and affection. In general, Jesus is the Son of God, or eminently so, as he is, so far as we know, the

\* Il y a simplement dans le Grec, *si vous êtes Fils de Dieu*, sans article. On le laisse pas de l'ajouter. Car le miracle, que le diable exige de J. C. montre, qu'il ne s'agit pas de savoir, *si Jesus est enfant de Dieu*, mais s'il est *le Fils de Dieu*, par excellence, c. à. d. le Messie."—*L'Enfant sur Matt.* iv. 3.

person in all the world most dear to God the Father. To be more particular:—

1. Jesus is the Son of God, upon account of his miraculous conception and birth.

Luke i. 31—35. *An angel appeared to Mary, and said unto her: Fear not, Mary. For thou hast found favour with God. And behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and shalt bring forth a Son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest . . . The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee. Therefore also that holy thing, which shall be born of thee, shall be called the Son of God.* A like history of our Saviour's nativity is in the first chapter of St. Matthew's Gospel.

2. Jesus is the Son of God, upon account of the especial commission given him by the Father, and the extraordinary qualification bestowed upon him in order to his fulfilling it.

John x. 36. *Say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest, because I said, I am the Son of God?*

When our Lord was baptized, *the Spirit of God descended like a dove, and rested upon him.* Matth. iii. 16. Mark i. 10. Luke iii. 21. 22. And John i. 32—34. *And John bare record, saying: I saw the Spirit descending from heaven, like a dove, and it abode upon him . . . And I saw, and bare record, that this is the Son of God.* And ch. iii. 34. says John the Baptist again: *God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto*

him. Is. xi. 1—3. *And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his root. And the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge, and of the fear of the Lord. And shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord.* Comp. Is. xlii. 1—4. lxi. 1—3. and Matth. xii. 17. and Luke iv. 18. 19.

By virtue of this most plentiful and extraordinary communication of the Spirit, *without measure, or the indwelling of the Father's fullness in him*, as the same thing is at other times expressed, or his being *in the bosom of the Father*, and acquainted with all his counsels, Jesus knew the whole will of God concerning the salvation of men, and spake the words of God with full authority, and wrought miracles of all kinds, whenever he pleased, and knew the thoughts and characters of men, and things at a distance, and things to come.

3. Jesus is the Son of God, upon account of his resurrection from the dead, on the third day, to die no more.

Rom. i. 3. 4. *Concerning his Son Jesus Christ, our Lord, which was made of the seed of David, according to the flesh, and declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.* And Heb. i. 6. *When he bringeth in the first-begotten into the World, he saith: And let all the angels of God worship him.* Which some have under-

stood of our Lord's coming into the world, at his nativity. But more generally interpreters have understood it of our Lord's entering into his glory, and taking possession of his kingdom after his resurrection. Which brings me to another thing.

4. Jesus is the Son of God, on account of his exaltation to God's right-hand, and being invested with authority and dominion over all flesh, and constituted judge of the world, by whom God will pass sentence upon all mankind.

John iii. 35. *The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand.* Chap. v. 21. 22. *The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgement unto the Son, that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father.* Heb. i. 1. 2. *God . . . hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir, or lord, of all things.* Ch. iii. 5. 6. *Moses verily was faithful in all his house, as a servant . . . But Christ as a Son over his own house.*

5. Another token of the especial love of the Father for Jesus Christ, as his own Son, is the pouring out of abundance of spiritual gifts, though in different degrees, upon his Apostles, and all who believed in him after his resurrection.

John i. 32—34. *And John bare record, saying: I saw the Spirit descending from heaven, like a dove. And it abode upon him. And I knew him not. But he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me: Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending and remaining, the same is*

*he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost. And I saw, and bare record, that this is the Son of God. Comp. Matth. iii. 11. Mark i. 8. Luke iii. 16.*

*John vii. 37—39. In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood, and cried, saying: If any man thirst, let him come to me and drink. He that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. This spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive. For the Holy Ghost was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified.*

*Acts xi. 15. 16. And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning. Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said: John indeed baptized with water; But ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost. See Acts i. 5. and ii. 1—36.*

*Gal. iv. 6. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying: Abba, Father.*

*Eph. iv. 8—11. When he ascended up on high, he gave gifts unto men. . . . And he gave some Apostles, and some Prophets, and some Evangelists, and some Pastors, and Teachers.*

Upon all these accounts, and not only upon account of his miraculous conception and birth, is Jesus *the Son of God*. The texts alleged under each particular sufficiently show, that they are all justly mentioned, and that none of them ought to be omitted.

There are some expressions in St. Luke's history of our Lord's nativity of a virgin mother, which show the truth of this observation. They likewise manifestly show, that it is in respect to his humanity, and the dignity conferred upon it, that he has the title of *the Son of God*. The expressions, which were partly alleged before, are exceeding remarkable. *And the angel said unto her: Fear not, Mary. For thou hast found favour with God. And behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and shalt bring forth a Son. And thou shalt call his name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest. And the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David. And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever. And of his kingdom there shall be no end.* Luke i. 33.

Upon all the fore-mentioned accounts, then, and his transcendent greatness, Jesus is *the Son of God*. And all these things may be supposed to be comprehended in that expression. Hebr. i. 9. *Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity. Therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.* The words are a quotation from Ps. xlv. 7. and seem to have been originally intended of Solomon, who by divine choice and designation was preferred before his brethren. 1 Chron. xxviii. 5. But they are also fitly applied to the Messiah, who has been greatly distinguished, and highly honoured above *his brethren*: meaning men, of whose nature he partook, Heb. ii. 14. 16. 17.

or prophets, who had the Spirit in a due, but less measure, bestowed upon them.

All these prerogatives has God the Father, in his unsearchable wisdom, conferred upon Jesus of Nazareth, whom he chose, and appointed to be the Messiah: who is also *the seed of the woman*, that shall bruise the head of the serpent, Gen. iii. 15. and *the seed of Abraham*, in and through whom all the families or nations of the earth were to be blessed. Gen. xii. 3. xviii. 18. Acts iii. 25. Gal. iii. 8. *The rod out of the stem of Jesse, and the branch that should grow out of his root, to whom the Gentiles would seek.* Isaiah xi. 1—10.

*Who was to restore the preserved of Israel, and was likewise given to be a light to the Gentiles, that he might be for salvation to the ends of the earth.* Is. xlix. 6. or, as old Simeon said, *A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of God's people Israel.* Luke ii. 32. For it is a certain truth, that the grace, which has been manifested by the appearing of Jesus Christ, was from early ages purposed by the Divine Being, and foretold by his Prophets. Rom. i. 1—3. Eph. i. 4. 2 Tim. i. 9. 10. 1 Pet. i. 10—12.

And how agreeable the several articles of this detail are to the scriptures of the Old Testament, must appear from texts already alleged thence. Nevertheless I shall here put together a few other texts, and some of the same more largely than hitherto quoted; not transcribing them now, but referring to them, and entreating you, if you please, to read and consider them at your leisure.



Ps. ii. 6. 7. 8. 11. 12.

Ps. xxii. throughout.

Is. xlii. 1. *Behold my servant, whom I uphold, my servant, in whom my soul delighteth.* Almost the very words of the voice, that came from heaven at our Lord's baptism and transfiguration. *I have put my Spirit upon him. He shall bring forth judgement unto the Gentiles.* And what follows to the end of ver. 7.

Is. xlix. 1—6. Compare Acts xiii. 47. and xxvi. 23.

We must now be able to perceive the true character of our blessed Saviour, and the great propriety with which the Apostles and Evangelists speak of him.

John i. 45. *Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him: We have found him, of whom Moses in the Law, and the Prophets did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.* And see ver. 46—50. And Acts ii. 22. *Ye men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you, by miracles, and signs, and wonders, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know.* See also ver. 36. Ch. iv. 27. *For of a truth, against thy holy child, [rather son, or servant,] Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together.* Ch. x. 38. *how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost, and with power. Who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil. For God*

*was with him.* Nor does our dear Redeemer disdain this title in his state of exaltation. For when he called to Saul out of heaven, and *Saul answered, Who art thou, Lord?* he said : *I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest.* Acts xxii. 6—8. Comp. ch. ix. 5. See likewise ch. iii. 6. and xxvi. 9.

From all that has been said, it appears, that Jesus is a man, appointed, anointed, beloved, honoured, and exalted by God, above all other beings\*.

\* Some now by *the Son of God* understand an intelligent being, or emanation, begotten by the Father, or proceeding from him, in an ineffable manner, from all eternity, and of the same essence or substance with the Father. Others thereby understand a mighty spirit, or angel, begotten or formed by the will of the Father, in time, before the creation of the world, and of a different substance from the Father. Which Son of God, according to them, became incarnate ; that is, united himself, either to the human nature, consisting of soul and body, or to a human body, so as to supply the place of a human soul.

But those senses of this phrase, or title, are not to be found in any of the books of the New Testament. "The Jews had no notion, that their Messiah should be any thing more than mere man. See Whitby upon Rom. ix. 5." *Dr. Jortin's Discourses concerning the Christian Religion*, p. 17. Which indeed is well shown in the passages of ancient authors, alleged by Whitby in the place referred to.

This will lead us to the true meaning of the title, *the Son of God*, in the Gospels. For there many give our Lord that title, who took him to be a man, especially favoured by God. This title is given to our Lord, not only by Peter in his confession, Matt. xvi. 16. and the parallel places, and John vi. 69. but also by John the Baptist, John i. 34. iii. 35. 36. by Nathanael, John i. 49. by Martha, xi. 27. and by others, Matth. xiv. 33. Luke iv. 41. Our blessed Lord likewise often

Obj. 1. It may be said: Admitting this notion of our Saviour's person, we shall lose that great instance of humiliation and condescension which the Arian scheme sets before us. For according to that, the most exalted spirit, next to God the Father, submits to all the laws of infancy and childhood, and is greatly incommoded by the body, during its dwelling in this earth.

To which I answer, I would by no means rob you, or any one else, of any argument, that is

takes it to himself, either directly, or indirectly, John iii. 16. 17. 18. v. 25. ix. 35—37. x. 36. xi. 4.

The case seems to be this:—In the Jewish style, and the language of Scripture, all good men, and all people, who are in a covenant relation to God, are his sons, and are entitled to many blessings and privileges: but Jesus, as the Messiah, is *the Son of God*, by way of eminence and distinction.

Exod. iv. 22. 23. *And thou shalt say unto Pharaoh: Thus saith the Lord: Israel is my son, even my first-born. And I say unto thee: Let my son go, that he may serve me.* Is. xliii. 6. *Bring my sons from afar, and my daughters from the ends of the earth.* See likewise Is. xlv. 11. 12. And Jer. xxxi. 9. *For I am a Father unto Israel, and Ephraim is my first-born.* Ver. 20. *Is Ephraim my dear son? is he a pleasant child?* Hos. xi. 1. *When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt.* To which I must add Jer. xxxi. 1. *At the same time, saith the Lord, I will be the God of all the families of Israel. And they shall be my people.* Comp. ver. 9. and 33. All which is expressed by St. Paul after this manner. 2 Cor. vi. 18. *And I will be a Father unto them. And they shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.* See there also ver. 16. 17.

Accordingly, in the New Testament, the Gentiles, who received Jesus as the Christ, being brought into God's family, and into the number of his people, are called, *the Sons of*

really suited to engage to humility in particular, or to all virtue in general. But, Papinian, if I am not mistaken, it appears from what was before said, that this instance of humiliation is an imaginary thing. It is impossible that so exalted a spirit should be the soul of the human body. If it is not an absolute contradiction, it is incongruous to the nature of things, and in the highest degree improbable.

And if so great a being were to inhabit a human body, it would entirely swallow it up. That

*God.* John i. 12. *But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.* Comp. 1 John iii. 1. And see Rom. viii. 14—17. Gal. iv. 4—7. and Heb. ii. 10. and elsewhere.

Matth. xxvii. 54. *Now when the Centurion, and they that were with him, watching Jesus, saw the earthquake, and those things that were done, they feared greatly, saying: Truly this was the Son of God.* Comp. Mark xv. 39. And says St. Luke, ch. xxiii. 39. *Now when the Centurion saw what was done, he glorified God, saying: Certainly, this was a righteous man.*

All good men and women, then, are God's sons and daughters. But Jesus, the Messiah, is *the Son of God*, by way of eminence and distinction, and has in all things the pre-eminence.

This, as seems to me, is the way of thinking, to which we are led by comparing many texts of the Old and New Testament, where the title or denomination of *Son of God* is used.

There is therefore no foundation for the interpretations mentioned at the beginning of this note. Which, nevertheless, have been received by many, and have produced intricate schemes and systems, by which the minds of Christians have been greatly perplexed, and the world itself sometimes thrown into confusion and disturbance.

spirit would still retain its own knowledge and power, and would raise the body above all pains, weaknesses, and wants.

Whatever advantages may be fancied on the Arian scheme, there are much greater inconveniences attending it. For, as before hinted, it deprives us of the force of our Saviour's example. We are common men ; but he is supposed to be the most perfect spirit, next to God. How should any temptation, from the things of this world, affect such a being? How should he be tempted, in all respects, as we are? It could not be : it is altogether irrational.

But there are many and great advantages in supposing Jesus Christ to be a man, consisting of soul and body. His example is then justly set before us in all the strength and beauty with which it now appears in the gospels and epistles of the New Testament.

It is also upon the ground of this scheme alone, that the expectation of attaining to a glory, like that of Jesus Christ, can be supported. For which, however, there is a plain encouragement in the doctrine of the Gospel. John xvii. 21—26. Rom. viii. 17. 2 Tim. ii. 11. 12. Rev. iii. 21. and elsewhere.

These are the most glorious, the most animating hopes that can be conceived. They excite to faithfulness and zeal beyond expression. We may be made like unto Jesus Christ hereafter, if we will but follow his example, and resemble him now. But how can we admit the thought of being

near to him, in the future state, who besides the merit of his obedience and sufferings here, has, in the Arian hypothesis, the glory of being employed by God in things of a quite different nature, such as creating this visible world, and all the angels and invisible hosts of heaven ?

And is not this one reason of our slothfulness, and other faults ? *The truth is not in us : the words of Christ do not abide in us.* We suffer ourselves to be deluded, and perverted from the truth and simplicity of the Gospel, by the philosophical schemes of speculative men. And so almost any man *may take our crown.* Rev. iii. 11.

I believe, Papinian, that you, as well as other serious Christians, desire, with the Apostle Paul, *to know Christ, and the power of his resurrection.* Philip. iii. 10. But what is there extraordinary in the resurrection of Christ, according to the Arian hypothesis ? Is it any thing extraordinary, that the Logos (in the Arian sense of that word,) should raise the body, in which he has acted and suffered for a while ? He might be supposed to have an especial regard for that body, and be willing to make it glorious. But I do not see, that such a resurrection can so fully assure us of our own, as if we suppose Christ to be a man like unto us : for then his resurrection is a pattern of ours ; which is the doctrine of the New Testament. 1 Cor. xv. 20—23. and the glorious argument of St. Paul, Eph. i. 17—23. Hereby we are indeed assured of our resurrection. God the Father, who gave his own Son for us,

and raised him up from the dead, will, most certainly, raise up us also, as it is expressed, 2 Cor. iv. 14. *Knowing, that he, who raised up the Lord Jesus, shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you.* And see Philip. iii. 20. 21. In a word, here is the best foundation of unmoveable confidence in God. And the Apostle expressly says in the place just referred to in 1 Cor. xv. 21. *Since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead.*

Obj. 2. Again, it may be objected, that this idea of the person of Jesus does not fully suit the strong expressions in the New Testament, concerning the love of God, in giving his Son for us.

But I think it does. For can there be any greater love than for that person, who is immediately sent by God, who is his ambassador, invested with all his power and authority, who is the object of the Father's especial love, and therefore his own Son, who was *holy, harmless, and undefiled*, Heb. vii. 16. to live a mean, despised, reproached life in this world, and then to die a painful and ignominious death, for our good, and for the good of mankind in general?

Besides, this is that love of God, which is so much and so justly magnified and extolled in the New Testament: that God gave his Son to die for us. *He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all; how shall he not with him freely give us all things?* And see before, ch. v. 6. 7. 8. and 2 Cor. v. 14. 15. *Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this*

*present evil world, according to the will of God, even our Father.* Gal. i. 4. See likewise 1 Tim. ii. 6. 1 Pet. i. 18—21. 1 John iii. 16. iv. 9. 10. and many other places.

If Christ had dwelt in pre-existent glory, and had come from heaven to animate a human body; this also would have been plainly and frequently represented to us.

In the way now mentioned, we go to God directly through Jesus Christ. And the love of the Father is most conspicuous in the supposition, that God sent and appointed the man Jesus Christ, for our salvation. Herein, I say, the love of God is most conspicuous; much more than in supposing the pre-existence of the Son, the covenant of redemption, and the offer of the Son to come into the world, and many other such-like things, derogatory to the honour of the Father; because they diminish our idea of his free, transcendent, and unmerited love and goodness. The Gospel-account is summed up in these words: *And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ. And hath given unto us the ministry of reconciliation: to wit, that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them: and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.* 2 Cor. v. 18. 19. See likewise what follows in ver. 20. 21. and Eph. i. 1—10.

Upon the whole, as before said, the true evangelical description of our blessed Saviour's person and character is that which we have in St. Peter's



words, recorded Acts ii. 22. and 36. and ch. x. 38. and St. Paul's, Acts xvii. 31. and 1 Tim. ii. 5. Col. ii. 3—9. and many other places.

Nor is this a diminishing character. It is the greatest; and the most honourable to him, on whom it is bestowed, and the most satisfying to us, who are called upon to believe in him, to rely upon him, and follow him in the way of obedience prescribed to us.

Says God to the people of Israel of old, *Behold, I send an angel before thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared. Beware of him, and obey his voice, provoke him not. For he will not pardon your transgressions. For my name is in him.* Exod. xxiii. 20. 21. Upon which place Patrick speaks to this purpose: "*For my name is in him.*" He acts by my authority and power, and sustains my person, who am present where he is. For the *name of God* is said to be there, where he is present after a singular and extraordinary manner. 1 Kings viii. 16. 1 Chron. vi. 5. 6. Maimonides expounds it, *My Word is in him*; that is, says he, God's will and pleasure was declared by the angel . . . In which he seems to follow the Chaldee, who translates it, *for his Word is in my name*, that is, what he speaks is by my authority.

Afterwards, when the people had transgressed in making a golden calf, and God was greatly displeased, Moses offered an earnest prayer, that he would himself go with them, and conduct them, Exod. xxxiii. 12. 13. And he received this

gracious answer, by which he was encouraged, ver. 14. 15. *And he said: My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest. And he said: If thy presence go not with us, carry us not hence\*.*

*My presence*, that is, I, myself, as in the Greek version: *αυτος προπορευσομαι σοι*. In the Hebrew it is, literally, *my face*. Which is the same as *myself*. So 2 Sam. xvii. 11. *and that thou go to the battle in thy own person*. In the Hebrew it is: *that thy face go to the battle*.

That the presence of God was with Jesus, the Messiah, our Lord and Saviour, in the most signal and extraordinary manner, we are assured by every book and chapter of the New Testament, and particularly by St. John's Gospel, in the introduction, and throughout.

The dignity of Jesus, as Messiah, is very great,

\* "The question upon this occasion was, Whether God would *Himself* go up with the people, who had highly offended Him: or whether He should send an *angel* before them, to conduct them. God said to Moses: *I will send an angel before thee*. And added: *For I will not go up in the midst of thee: for thou art a stiffnecked people: lest I consume thee in the way*. Exod. xxxii. 1—3. Upon the prayer and intercession of Moses, God is pleased to promise, that *his Presence* should go with him. The promise must be understood necessarily, in opposition to the foregoing threatening, that God would not go up in the midst of them, but that he would send an *angel* before them."

"The presence of God therefore in this place must be *αυτος ο θεος* . . . as the Seventy justly render it: and that in direct opposition to an *angel* in his name and stead." *Mr. Moses Lowman, in his Tracts, p. 38. 39. See also p. 37.*

far superior to that of angels. We know it from our Lord himself, and from things said by him, whilst dwelling on this earth. Matth. xxiv. 36. *But of that day and hour, knoweth no man, no, not the angels in heaven, but my Father only.* Which is thus expressed in Mark xiii. 33. *But of that day and that hour, knoweth no man, no not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father.* To which let me add John xiv. 28. *If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father. For my Father is greater than I.* Which I suppose to be said of our Lord, as man.

Nor am I singular therein. The same is said by Augustin, whom I shall write out for your use. “Non recte cogitas, quem locum in rebus habeat humana natura, quæ condita est ad imaginem Dei. Majores angeli dici possunt homine, quia majores sunt hominis corpore: majores sunt et animo, sed in forma, quam peccati originalis merito corruptibile aggravat corpus. Naturâ vero humanâ, qualem naturam Christus humanæ mentis assumpsit, quæ nullo peccato potuit depravari, Deus solus est major . . . Naturâ vero hominis, quæ mente rationali et intellectuali creaturas ceteras antecedit, Deus solus est major: cui utique injuria facta non est, ubi scriptum est, *Major est Deus corde nostro.* 1 Joh. iii. 20. Filius ergo Dei susceptum hominem levaturus ad Patrem, quando dicebat, *Si diligeretis me, gauderetis utique, quia vado ad Patrem, quia Pater major me est,* Joh. xiv. 28. non carni suæ solum, sed etiam

menti, quam gerebat, humanæ, Deum Patrem utique præferebat.”—*Aug. Contr. Maximin. Arian.* l. 2. cap. xxv. tom. 8.

Dr. Whitby’s Paraphrase of Mark xiii. 32. is thus : “ *Neither the Son*, who has the Spirit without measure, but *the Father* only.”

What I have been arguing for, was the sentiment of the Nazarene Christians. Nor do I think it can be made appear, that any Jews, who were believers, had any other idea of our Saviour : excepting those called Ebionites, or some of them, who were extremely mistaken in supposing that Jesus was the son of Joseph and Mary \*.

\* Athanasius says that “ the Jews of that time being in an error, and thinking that the expected Messiah would be a mere man, of the seed of David . . . for that reason the blessed Apostles in great wisdom first instructed the Jews in the things concerning our Saviour’s humanity.” *De Sentent. Dionysii*, n. 8. p. 248. C. D.

Chrysostom, at the beginning of his fourth homily upon St. John’s Gospel, says : “ The other Evangelists having chiefly insisted upon our Saviour’s humanity, there was danger, lest his eternal generation should have been neglected by some : and men might have been of the same opinion with *Paul of Samosuta*, if John had not writ.” *In Joh. Hom. 4.* tom. 8. p. 27. A. B. Bened.

In his first homily upon the Acts he expresses himself again to this purpose : “ In the discourses of the Apostles, recorded in this book, little is said about Christ’s divinity. But they discourse chiefly of his humanity, and passion, and resurrection, and ascension : because his resurrection and ascension to heaven were the points necessary to be proved and believed at that time.” *In Act. Ap. Hom. 1.* tom. 9. p. 3. A.

Augustin, in one of his Sermons, says, “ Peter and the other Apostles have writ of our Lord, but it is chiefly concerning his humanity.” Again, “ Peter says little of our

The notion of an inferior deity, pre-existing, and then incarnate, seems to have been brought into the church by some of the learned converts from heathenism, who had not thoroughly abandoned the principles in which they had been educated. Perhaps, likewise, they hoped by this means to render the doctrine of Christ more palatable to heathen people, especially their philo-

Lord's divinity in his Epistles, but John enlarges upon that subject in his Gospel." "Quoniam Petrus scripsit de Domino, scripserunt et alii: sed scriptura eorum magis circa humanitatem Domini est occupata . . . Sed de divinitate Christi in literis Petri aliquid: [al. non aliquid:] in Evangelio autem Johannis multum eminet."—*Serm.* 253. *cap.* 4. *tom.* 5. And in his Confessions he informs us, that for a great while he was of opinion, that Jesus was a most wise and excellent man, miraculously born of a virgin, and sent by God, with a high commission, to give us an example of steadfast virtue, amidst the temptations of this world, and to instruct us in the way, how we might obtain everlasting salvation. "Ego vero aliud putabam, tantumque sentiebam de Domino Christo meo, quantum de excellentis sapientiæ viro, cui nullus posset æquari: præsertim quia mirabiliter natus ex virgine, ad exemplum contemnendorum temporalium pro adipiscenda immortalitate, divina pro nobis cura tantum auctoritatem magisterii meruisse videbatur."—*Conf.* l. 7. c. 19. n. 25. "Ego autem aliquanto posterius didicisse me fateor . . . quomodo catholica veritas a Photini falsitate dirimatur."—*Ibid.* But upon reading the works of some Platonic philosophers, which were put into his hands, he altered his opinion. "Et primo volens ostendere mihi . . . quod Verbum tuum caro factum est, et habitavit inter homines, procurasti mihi per quemdam hominem immanissimo Typho turgidum, quosdam Platoniorum libros ex Græca lingua in Latinam versos: et ibi legi, non quidem his verbis, sed hoc idem omnino multis et multiplicibus suaderi rationibus, quod in principio erat Verbum, &c."—*Ibid.* *cap.* 9. n. 13. *Vid. et cap.* 20. n. 26.

sophers. Moreover, the Christians of the second century, and afterwards, were too averse to all Jews in general, and even to the believers from among that people. The Apostle Paul had seen a temper of pride and insolence springing up in the Gentile Christians, in his own time: or he would not have delivered that caution, which we find in Rom. xi. 17—24.\*

Thus far have I pursued my own thoughts, without consulting any other writer at all, or very slightly, except in those places where I have ex-

\* "I take this breach of communion, correspondence, and communication, between the Jewish Christians, that fled from Jerusalem into the East, and the Gentile Christians, (which breach continued till the former were totally destroyed or dissipated,) to have been a great mismanagement, and the greatest misfortune that ever befel the Christian church. . . . St. Paul laboured with all his might, aim, and study, to keep up union, communion, and friendship, between these two bodies of Christians. And he did with great difficulty preserve it, in some good measure, as long as he lived. . . . Epiphanius had some knowledge of those of the Jewish Christians, which remained to his time, that is, 370, whom the Gentile Christians then called *Nazarenes*. And he styles them heretics, for no other reason, that I can perceive, but that they, together with their Christian faith, continued the use of circumcision and of the Jewish law. Which is a thing that St. Paul never blamed in a Jewish Christian, though in the Gentile Christians he did."—*Dr. William Wall, in the preface to his Notes on the O. T.*, p. 11, 12.

That is a melancholy observation. Let us endeavour to repair the damage here bewailed, by diligently studying, and resolutely adhering to the doctrine of Christ's Apostles, as contained in the books of the New Testament: wherein, I verily believe, are delivered all the truths of religion, and in sufficient perspicuity, if we will but attend.

pressly said so. But I all along intended, before I finished, to observe a part of what is said by Dr. Clarke in his *Scripture-Doctrine of the Trinity*: which I have now done. And I cannot forbear saying, that his interpretations of texts are generally false, arising, as from some other causes, so particularly, from an aversion to Sabellian, or Socinian senses: some of which may be absurd and unnatural. But I much prefer Grotius's interpretation, upon the comparison, above Dr. Clarke's. So far as I am able to judge, Grotius explains texts better than the professed Socinians. The reason may be, that he had more learning, and particularly was better acquainted with the Jewish style. But I am apt to think, that their later writers have borrowed from him, and improved by him.

However, this is said very much in the way of conjecture. For I must acknowledge, that I have not been greatly conversant with the writers of that denomination. I have never read *Crellius de uno Deo Patre*; though I believe it to be a very good book. There is also, in our own language, a Collection of Unitarian Tracts, in two or three quartos. But I am not acquainted with it; nor can I remember that I ever looked into it. I have formed my sentiments upon the Scriptures, and by reading such commentators chiefly as are in the best repute. I may add, that the reading of the ancient writers of the church has been of use to confirm me, and to assist me in clearing up difficulties.

I observe then, that many of the texts in Dr. Clarke, p. i. ch. ii. sect. 3. concerning the *highest titles* given to Christ, instead of proving his opinion, are inconsistent with it, and confirm that for which I argue. Yea, they prove it, and agree with no other: such as, *the Father is in me, and I in him: He that seeth me, seeth him that sent me: If ye had known me, ye would have known the Father also: I in the Father, and you in me, and I in you: He that hateth me, hateth my Father also: All things that the Father hath, are mine, &c. &c.*

*Script. Doctr.* chap. ii. sect. 3. numb. 616. p. 114. 115. is a quotation from Justin Martyr. "The Jews, saith he, are justly reprov'd for imagining, that the Father of all things spake to Moses, when indeed it was the Son of God, who is called the angel and the messenger of the Father." Again, afterwards, from the same Justin: "Yet it was not God, the creator of the universe, which then said to Moses, that he was *the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.*"

This appears to me very strange, that the Jews should not know who was their God, and delivered the law by Moses. And I cannot help wondering that any learned men of our times should pay any regard to such observations as these. Is it not better to say, that Justin was mistaken, than that the Jewish people were mistaken, in such a thing as this? For Justin was a convert from heathenism, and had been a phi-



losopher, and brought along with him many prejudices, which might hinder his rightly understanding the Old Testament.

That God, who spoke to Moses, and brought the people of Israel out of Egypt, is the Creator of the universe, is manifest; *Exod. xx. 1. 2. 3. And God spake all these words, saying: I am the Lord thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt. Thou shalt have no other gods before me. Ver. 10. 11. But the seventh day is the sabbath of Jehovah, thy God. . . . For in six days Jehovah made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is. Is. xl. 27. 28. Why sayest thou, O Jacob . . my way is hid from the Lord, and my judgement is passed over from my God? Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? See also ch. xlv. 11. 12. and elsewhere.*

Neither our Saviour, nor his Apostles, had any debate with Jews upon this head: but plainly suppose, that they were right as to the object of worship. Therefore our Lord says to the woman of Samaria, *John iv. 22. Ye worship ye know not what. We know what we worship. For salvation is of the Jews. John viii. 54. It is my Father that honoureth me: of whom ye say, that he is your God. Acts iii. 13. The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified his Son Jesus. v. 30. The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew, and hanged on a tree. Are not these texts clear?*

However, see likewise Matth. xi. 25. John xvii. throughout, and xx. 17. 21. Eph. iii. 14. Heb. i. 1. 2. 1 John iv. 14.

Mark xii. 28. *One of the Scribes came, and asked him, Which is the first commandment of all?* 29. *Jesus answered him: The first of all the commandments is: Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord.* Deut. vi. 4. To which the Scribe assented. And ver. 34. *When Jesus saw that he answered discreetly, he said unto him: Thou art not far from the kingdom of God.* All which supposeth, that the Jews were not mistaken about the object of worship.

Once more. Our Lord's argument with the Sadducees, in behalf of a resurrection, taken from Exod. iii. 6. and recorded Matth. xxii. Mark xii. Luke xx. supposeth *the God of Abraham, &c.* to be the one true God, *who is not the God of the dead, but of the living.* *For all live unto him.*

In short, if Justin Martyr be in the right, it is not sufficient to say, that the Jewish people were mistaken: but we must say, that the Old and New Testament, and the sacred penmen of them, and all who speak therein by inspiration, are mistaken.

Unquestionably, God may make use of the ministry of angels as well as of men. But it is not the messenger, who is God: but He, from whom he comes, and in whose name he speaks.

I may show this by an instance or two. Gen. xxii. 15—18. *And the angel of the Lord called*

unto Abraham out of heaven the second time, and said : *By myself have I sworn, saith the Lord, that because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thy only son ; in blessing I will bless thee.* Here is mentioned an angel. But he is only God's messenger, and God speaks by him. Of this we are fully assured by an argument in the Epistle to the Hebrews, ch. vi. 13. 14. *For when God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he swore by himself, saying : Surely, blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee.*

For certain, therefore, this was the oath of God Almighty, the one living and true God, and the Creator of all things. For there was *no greater than he*. And that this was the one true God, appears, as from many other texts, so particularly from Ps. cv. where the Psalmist gratefully commemorates God's wonderful works, and expressly mentions his mindfulness of *his covenant with Abraham, and his oath unto Isaac.* ver. 9.

St. Stephen speaks of the Jews having received *the law by the disposition of angels*, Acts vii. 54, that is, by their ministration under God, the supreme Lawgiver, who at that time had the attendance of a numerous host of his angels, Deut. xxxiii. 1. 2. Comp. Heb. ii. 2. And, says the Psalmist, very poetically, Ps. lxxviii. 17. *The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of thousands. The Lord is among them, in his holy place, as in Sinai.* And see Is. xxxiii. 22.

I must take some other things from the above-mentioned learned writer.

*Script. Doctr.* chap. ii. sect. 3. numb. 576. "John iii. 13. *No man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man, which is in heaven.* The meaning is explained ch. i. 18. *No man hath seen God at any time. The only-begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.*" Excellently well, in my opinion. That is the whole of Dr. Clarke's note upon that text.

*Script. Doctr.* n. 580. p. 96. John v. 18. *But said also, that God was his Father, making himself equal with God.* Here Dr. Clarke speaks to this purpose. "Assuming to himself the power and authority of God. It is the same accusation with that other, ch. x. 33. *We stone thee . . . for blasphemy, and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God.* And Mark ii. 7. *Why does this man thus speak blasphemy? Who can forgive sins, but God only?* The Jews, it is evident, did not, by these expressions, mean to charge Jesus with affirming himself to be the supreme, self-existent, independent Deity : nay, not so much as with taking upon him to be a divine person at all ; but only with assuming to himself the power and authority of God." So far is not amiss, in my opinion. What follows there, I leave to those who may like it.

*Script. Doctr.* n. 645. p. 124. Col. ii. 9. *For in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.* The note is this : "Ch. i. 19. *It pleased*

*the Father, that in him should all fullness dwell.* And John xiv. 10. *The Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works."* Excellently well, according to my apprehension.

This will lead me to proceed somewhat further; and to consider some other texts before I conclude.

Rom. i. 3. 4. *Concerning his Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, who was of the seed of David according to the flesh, and declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.*

Here are two things, *first*, that *Jesus was made of the seed of David*: *secondly*, that *he was declared to be the Son of God by the resurrection from the dead*. Both which may be illustrated by comparing other texts.

How this text is explained by those who favour the Arian hypothesis, of the Logos supplying the place of a human soul in the person of Jesus, may be seen in divers writers\*. I shall explain it as I am able, without attempting a particular confutation of any.

*First: who was made of the seed of David, according to the flesh.* That phrase, *according to the flesh*, is in several other texts: some of which may be observed. Acts ii. 30. *Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit*

\* See the Paraphrases of Mr. Locke and Dr. Taylor.

on his throne . Rom. ix. 3. *For I could wish, that myself were accursed from Christ, for my brethren, my kinsmen, according to the flesh . . . 5. Whose are the Father's, and of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came.* And see 2 Cor. v. 16.

Secondly, it is added : *and declared to be the Son of God, with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.*

There are several texts to be observed here. Acts ii. 32. *This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses . . . 36. Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.* Jesus was, and had been declared to be the Christ, the Son of God, whilst he was here on earth. But this was more fully manifested by his resurrection, and the consequent effusion of the Holy Ghost upon the Apostles and others. See Acts xiii. 33. and Heb. v. 5. And our Lord himself had mentioned this to the Jews as *the sign*, the most decisive and demonstrative evidence, that he was indeed the Messiah, as he had said. See Matth. xii. 38—40. xvi. 1—5. Luke xi. 29. 30. John ii. 18. 19. iii. 14. viii. 28. xii. 32.

Now therefore we may explain, and paraphrase this text, after this manner : “Concerning his Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, who, with regard to the external circumstances of his nativity into this world, was of the family and lineage of David, from whom God had promised the Messiah should descend. And with regard to the *Spirit of holi-*

ness, or the Divine energy and influence, by which he had been conceived in the womb, and by which he was sanctified to his high office, and by which he wrought the greatest miracles, he was the Son of God, and was known to be so : but was most fully and solemnly constituted, and declared to be the Son of God, by that wonderful demonstration of the Divine power, his resurrection from the dead."

Nor is it easy to avoid recollecting here, in what terms St. Paul speaks of the power which God exerted in raising Christ from the dead, and exalting him to that dominion which was the consequence of his resurrection. Eph. i. 19—23.

I shall transcribe below\* a part of Grotius's Annotations upon this text, and refer to others †.

Eph. iii. 9. *And to make all men see, what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the be-*

\* "Sed sensum difficiliorem efficit curtata locutio, quam evolvere conabimur. *Jesus Filius Dei* multis modis dicitur: maxime populariter, ideo quod a Deo evectus est, quo sensu verba Psalmi ii. de Davide dicta, cum ad regnum pervenit, Christo aptantur. Act. xiii. 33. et ad Heb. i. 5. v. 5. Hæc autem *Filii* seu regia dignitas Jesu prædestinabatur, et præfigurabatur, jam tum cum mortalem agens vitam magna illa signa et prodigia ederet . . . Hæc signa edebat Jesus per *Spiritum illum sanctitatis*, id est, *vim divinam*, per quam ab initio conceptionis sanctificatus fuerat. Luc. i. 35 . . . Ostenditur ergo Jesus nobilis ex materna parte utpote ex Rege terreno ortus, sed nobilior ex paterna parte, quippe a Deo factus Rex cœlestis post resurrectionem. Heb. v. 9. Act. ii. 30. et xxvi. 2. 3."—*Grot. Annot. ad Rom. i. 4.*

† Vid. *Limborch. Comment. in Rom. i. 3. 4. et Enjedini Explicat. V. et N. Test. p. 258—264.*

*ginning of the world has been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ.*

Here it may be observed, in the first place, that those words, *by Jesus Christ*, are by some learned men suspected to be an interpolation\*.

But, *secondly*, allowing them to be genuine, it is to be observed, that many learned men are of opinion, that St. Paul is here speaking of the new creation. So says Grotius. “*Omnia Christus fecit nova. 1 Cor. v. 17. Et diviniore hæc creatio, quam prior illa.*” And you very well know Mr. Locke’s paraphrase, which is this: “Who frames and manages the whole new creation by Jesus Christ.” And he has endeavoured, in a long note, to support that paraphrase. This likewise is the sense of Calvin: “*Qui omnia creavit per Christum. Non tam de prima creatione interpretari licet, quam de instauratione spirituali. Tametsi enim verum est illud, Verbo Dei creata esse omnia, quemadmodum tot locis habetur: circumstantia tamen loci postulat, ut de renovatione intelligamus, quæ continetur in beneficio redemptionis.*” Beausobre likewise has a very valuable note upon this text: but being somewhat prolix, I only refer you to it.

2 Cor. iv. 4. Christ is styled *the image of God*.

\* “*Δια τοῦ ἰησοῦ χριστοῦ*” Deest in Alexandr. Vulg. Syr. [and is rejected by Griesbach] . . . Et quidem, cum vix fieri possit, ut exemplaribus antiquissimis exciderint, scribarum seu fraude, sive incuriâ, verba tam insignia, præsertim ante tempora Arii; adjecta hoc loco crediderim, interpretamenti gratiâ, ex illo Apostoli, Col i. 16.”—*Mill. in loc. Vid. et Bez. in loc.*



Ὅς ἐστὶν εἰκὼν τοῦ Θεοῦ. Upon which, Whitby's note is to this purpose : " Christ seems here to be styled the image of God, not in the sense of Theodoret, as being *God of God*, but rather, as the text insinuates, with relation to the Gospel, and his mediatory office : in which he has given us many glorious demonstrations of the power, the wisdom, the holiness, purity and justice, the mercy, goodness, and philanthropy of God. Tit. iii. 4." Beza's note upon the place is to the like purpose. " Id est, in quo seipsum perspicue conspiciendum præbat Deus, ut 1 Tim. iii. 16. Neque enim *Dei imaginem* nunc vocat Paulus Christum alio quam officii ipsius respectu : ut, licet vera, tamen sint ἀπροσδιονυσα, quæ nonnulli ex veteribus hoc loco περὶ τοῦ ὁμοουσιου disseruerunt." So that I need not here appeal to Grotius.

Cor. i. 15. *Who is the image of the invisible God.* Mr. Peirce's note is in these very words : " The Father alone is represented in the New Testament, as the *invisible God*. See John i. 18. v. 37. vi. 46. 1 Tim. i. 17. vi. 16. Heb. xi. 27. 1 John iv. 12. 20. Christ is never represented as invisible. It might seem strange if he should, since he actually took upon him flesh, and appeared, and was seen in the world : which are things the nature of the Father cannot possibly admit. His being called *the image of God*, in this place, and 2 Cor. iv. 4. implies his being visible, and that the perfections of God do most eminently shine forth in him."

.. So writes Mr. Peirce. And by Christ he seems to mean the Logos, or Christ in his pre-existent state, before he came into this world. Which appears to me not a little strange. God, the Father, unquestionably is invisible. So, I think, are the Logos, in the Arian sense of that term, and also angels, and the souls of men, and all beings which we call spirits. None of them are visible to our bodily eyes.

Therefore, Christ's being *the image of God* must be understood of his acting in this world. God is invisible in his nature and essence. But he can manifest himself, and make known to us his mind and will, by those whom he sends as his ministers. This appears to me very plain and evident from John xiv. 8—11. *Philip saith unto him : Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us.* What, now, is the answer, which our Lord makes to that disciple ? Does he reprehend him, as asking an impossibility ? No. His answer is this. *Jesus saith unto him : Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip ? He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father. And how sayest thou, Shew us the Father ?* See what follows, and ver. 7.

I think, that Irenæus says the same that I have just now done. "*Beati mundo corde, quoniam ipsi videbunt Deum. Sed secundum magnitudinem quidem ejus, et mirabilem gloriam, nemo videbit Deum, et vivet.* Exod. xxxiii. 20. Incapabilis enim Pater. Secundum autem dilectionem et humanitatem, et quod omnia possit, etiam hoc

concedit iis qui se diligunt, id est, videre Deum. . . . . Homo etenim a se non videt Deum. Ille autem volens videtur hominibus, quibus vult, et quando vult, et quemadmodum vult. Potens est enim in omnibus Deus: visus quidem tunc per spiritum prophetiæ, visus autem et per Filium adoptive. Videbitur autem et in regno cœlorum paternaliter."—*Iren. lib. 4. cap. 20. al. 37. n. 5. p. 254. \**

So likewise, when Christ is called *the image of God*, in 2 Cor. iv. 4. the place before cited, the meaning is, that he was so in this world. This I think to be exceeding evident from the context, which shall be now recited more at large : . . . . *lest the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them. . . . For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face or person of Jesus Christ.*

It follows in the same Col. i. 15. *Who is the first-born of every creature; or rather, as seems to me, of the whole creation; πρωτοτοκος πασης κτισεως*: that is, he is the chief, the most excellent of the whole creation. Pelagius says, it is

• I must transcribe Grotius here. "*Qui est imago Dei invisibilis. Dei inaspecti aspectabilis imago. Ita enim Latini loquuntur. Idem sensus 2 Cor. iv. 4. et 1 Tim. iii. 16. Heb. i. 3. Adam imago Dei fuit, sed valde tenuis. In Christo perfectissime apparuit, quam Deus esset sapiens, potens, bonus. Sic in aqua solem conspicimus. Aliud imago, aliud umbra qualis in Lege. Heb. x. 1.*"—*Grot. ad Col. i. 15.*

to be understood of Christ in regard to his humanity. He is the first, not in time, but in dignity. So it is said: *Israel is my first-born*. “*Primogenitus secundum assumpti hominis formam, non tempore, sed honore, juxta illud: Filius meus primogenitus Israel.*”—*Pelag. in loc. Ap. Hieron. tom. v. p. 1070.*

Grotius understands it of the new creation. He refers to 2 Cor. v. 17. Rev. xxi. 5. Heb. ii. 5. To which, perhaps, might have been added, Heb. xii. 23. *the church of the first-born, whose names are written in heaven* \*. He likewise says, that, in the sacred Scriptures, *the first-born* sometimes denotes the greatest or highest. And refers to Ps. lxxxix. 27. Jer. xxxi. 9. “*Primus in creatione, nova scilicet, de qua 2 Cor. v. 17. . . . Primogenitum Hebræis dicitur et quod primum, et quod summum est in quoque genere.*”

For the explication of what follows, I mean Col. i. 16—20. I beg leave to refer you to Grotius.

Heb. i. 1. 2. *God, who at sundry times, and in divers manners, spake in time past unto the Fathers by or in the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by or in his Son, the promised Messiah: εν τοις προφηταις . . . εν υιω. Whom he hath appointed heir of all things. By whom also he made the worlds.* Grotius thinks, that the

\* By Christ we are all called to be the *first-born*, that is, to be all *hallowed*, and to be called God's *peculiar*, as were the *first-born* before the Levites were taken in their stead.”—*Dr. Sykes upon Hebr. xii. 23.*

Greek phrase may be rendered *for whom*. Which is very suitable to the coherence, it having been before said, that he was *appointed heir*, or lord of *all things*. “Videtur δι’ οὗ hic recte accipi posse pro δι’ οὗ, *propter quem*. Ideo autem hæc interpretatio hoc loco maxime mihi se probat, quia ad Hebræos scribens videtur respicere ad dictum vetus Hebræorum, propter Messiam conditum esse mundum \*.”

Ver. 3. *Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person*. That expresseth the glory of Jesus Christ in this world. He is the refulgence of the Father’s glory, which shone upon him, and was seen in him. In him appeared the wisdom, the power, the truth, the holiness, the goodness, the mercifulness of God. It is much the same as *the form of God*, Philipp. ii. 6. Says Grotius, ‘Ος ὡν ἀπαύγασμα τῆς δόξης . . . “Repercussus divinæ majestatis, qualis est in nube, quæ dicitur παρηλιος . . . Majestas divina, cum per se conspici nequeat, cernitur in

\* Moreover, it might be observed, “That Dr. Sykes says, the word *αἰῶνας*, which we render *worlds*, does not signify *the heavens, and the earth, and all things that are in them*: but it means, he says, properly, *ages, or certain periods of time*, in which such or such things were done. Such were the Patriarchal, that of the Law, that of the Messiah, that of the Antediluvians. . . . These were properly *αἰῶνες*, ages.” Admit, then, the interpretation of Grotius δι’ οὗ, to be *for whom*, and we have a most apt and beautiful sense; which is this: “*For whom also, or for whose sake also, or in respect to whom, he disposed and ordered the ages: that is, the antediluvian, the patriarchal, the legal ages, or periods, and all the divine dispensations towards the sons of men.*”

Christo, sicut sol, quem directe oculi nostri intueri nequeunt, cernitur in aqua, speculo, nube. Vide 2 Cor. iv. 4. Col. i. 15. *Και χαρακτηρ της ὑποστασεως αυτου . . . Ὑπόστασις* hic non ita sumitur, quomodo Platonici, et post Origenem ex Platonici Christiani, sumpsere. . . . Ita potentia, justitia, veritas in Deo Christi Patre sunt primario, in Christo vero secundario, sed ita ut nobis in Christo ea evidenter appareant. Joh. xiv. 9."

The same, ver. 3., and *upholding all things by the word of his power*. This must relate to our Saviour's transactions in this world, because it precedes the mention of his death, which follows next. I have looked into Brenius, who says the same. And I shall transcribe him, as it is likely you have him not with you. "Cumque omnia potenti suo jussu in terris ferret. *Φερειν* hic, ut interpretes nonnulli recte annotant, potius significat agere, sive moderari, et gubernare, quam portare aut ferre: nisi ferendi aut portandi verbum hoc sensu accipiat, et metaphorice designet Christum etiam in terris munus suum administrantem, omnia ad regni cœlestis in terris dispensationem pertinentia, velut humeris suis portasse. Conf. Is. ix. 6."

To the same purpose likewise Limborch, whom I shall transcribe also in part. "Sic videmus Domini Jesu potentiæ omnia fuisse subjecta, ejusque miracula fuisse universalia in totam naturam; nullamque fuisse creaturam, quin imperium ipsius agnoverit. . . . Quibus omnibus præconii sui divinitatem adstruxit, seque a Deo Patre

suo esse missum probavit. Quæ omnia solo jussu efficere, vere divinum est. Et qui id facit quasi imago Dei est, potentiamque divinam in se residere ostendit."

Hereby, then, is represented the power residing in Jesus, whereby he wrought the greatest miracles, whenever he pleased, by an effectual all-commanding word, healing diseases, raising the dead, rebuking stormy winds and waves, and they subsided, multiplying provisions in desert places, causing a fish to bring a stater for the tribute money to be paid to the temple, for himself, and the disciple at whose house he was entertained.

It follows in the same verse, *when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right-hand of the majesty on high.* Which last words include our Lord's resurrection from the dead, and his ascension to heaven, and there sitting on the right hand of the Father. Upon which the Apostle further enlargeth.

Ver. 4. 5. *Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they. For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee?* See 2 Sam. vii. 14. Ps. ii. 7. lxxxix. 26. 27.

Ver. 6. *And again, when he bringeth in the first-begotten into the world, he saith: And let all the angels of God worship him.*

Mr. Peirce's paraphrase of ver. 6. is thus. "So far is he from speaking in such a manner

of any of the angels, that on the contrary, when he brings again his first-begotten into the world, raising him from the dead, he says : And let all the angels of God be subject to him." See 1 Pet. iii. 21. 22. . . *by the resurrection of Jesus Christ : who is gone into heaven, and is on the right-hand of God : angels, and authorities, and powers, being made subject unto him.*

Ver. 7. *And of the angels he saith : Who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire.*

Ver. 8. *But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever : a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom.* Ver. 9. *Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity ; therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.*

*But unto the Son he saith.* (I think it should be thus rendered :) *But of the Son he saith : or with regard to the Son, he saith.* For in the original it is the same phrase, which in the seventh verse we have translated, *of the angels he saith.* So here : *With regard to the Son, he saith : Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever.* The words are in Ps. xlv. 6. *Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever. The sceptre of thy kingdom is a right sceptre.* The writer of this Epistle to the Hebrews says : " And with regard to the Son, or the Messiah, God's throne is for ever and ever : " that is, the kingdom of God, erected by the Messiah, is to have no period. And this is expressed in the words of the Psalmist here quoted. Comp. Luke



i. 33. 34. So likewise Dan. ii. 44. *And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed.* And in Rev. xiv. 6. the doctrine to be preached to all nations is called *the everlasting Gospel*.

Here I recollect a passage in Origen's books against Celsus, who informs us, he had met with a Jew, esteemed a very learned man, "who said, that those words, *Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: the sceptre of thy kingdom is a right sceptre*, are addressed to the God of the universe: but the following words, *thou lovest righteousness, and hatest iniquity: therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows*, are addressed to the Messiah." Καί μεμνημαι γε πανυ θλιψας τον ιουδαιον, νομιζομενον σοφον, εκ λεξεως ταυτης. 'Ος προς αυτην απορων, ειπε τα τψ εαυτου ιουδαισμφ ακολουθα' ειπε προς μεν τον των όλων θεον ειρησθαι το, ο θρονος σου ο θεος εις τον αιωνα τον αιωνος, ραβδος ενθυτητος ή ραβδος της βασιλειας σου' προς δε σον χρισον το, ηγαπησας δικαιοσυνην, και εμισησας ανομιαν. Δια τουτο εχρισε σε ο θεος, ο θεος σου, και τα εξης.—*Contr. Cels. l. 1. p. 43. Cant. tom. i. p. 371. Bened.*

Origen did not approve of that interpretation. But to me it appears both very right and very valuable. Nor is it so difficult, but that it might have been discerned by a Christian; were it not, that we are strangely misled by a great variety of wrong notions which prevail amongst us.

So again ver. 10. *And thou, Lord, in the be-*

*ginning hast laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of thy hands. 11. They shall perish, but thou remainest. And they all shall wax old like a garment. 12. And as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed. But thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail.* Which words are a quotation from Ps. cii. 25. 26. 27. where they are addressed to God. And so they are here. In order to preserve the connexion, we are to supply some such words as these at the beginning of the quotation. "And of the Son, or with regard to the Son, or the Messiah, the Scripture saith," *And thou, Lord, . . .* that is, upon account of the dispensation by the Messiah, which is to last for ever, are applicable those words: *And thou, Lord,* and what follows.

The Apostle, the more effectually to secure the stedfastness of the Jewish believers, observes to them the excellence, the importance, the wide extent, and long duration of the divine dispensation by the Messiah. The dispensation by Moses was limited to one nation, and to a certain period of time. But the dispensation of the Messiah was to be a universal blessing, and to subsist to the end of time. And to the kingdom of God by the Messiah are fitly applicable the texts cited in this place from the Old Testament.

In a word, hereby are shown the dignity and excellence of the evangelical dispensation, in that higher expressions are used concerning it than can be applied to any other.

I think, I have above shown from Scripture, that Jesus Christ was a man like unto us, or having a human soul, as well as a human body. Nor have you any reason upon that account to suspect me of heterodoxy. I think myself therein both a catholic, and a scriptural Christian. It has been the general belief of the church of Christ in all ages; and the glory of the evangelical dispensation depends upon it. In Socrates, the ecclesiastical historian, there is a chapter, where it is asserted, that this was the opinion of all the ancients in general, *εμφυχον τον ενανθρωπησαντα*, of Irenæus, Clement of Alexandria, Apollinarius of Hierapolis, Serapion Bishop of Antioch, Origen and others. *Socrat. l. 3. cap. viii.* Conf. *Theodoret. H. E. l. 5. cap. ix. et x.*

I can easily show it to have been the opinion of some later writers, who have always been in great repute for their right faith.

Epiphanius expresseth himself upon this subject very particularly, and very emphatically. For though our Saviour was not born in the ordinary way of human generation, *απο σπερματος ανδρος ουκ ην*, he says, he was perfect man, and was tempted like unto us, but without sin. *Παντα γαρ τελειως εσχε, τα παντα εχων, σαρκα, και νευρα, και φλεβας, και τα αλλα παντα οσα εστι ψυχην δε αληθινως, και ου δοκησει νυν δε και τα παντα οσα εστιν εν τη ανθρωπησει, χωρις αμαρτιας, ως γεγραπται . . Heb. iv. 15. Hær. 69. n. xxv. p. 750.*

To the like purpose Jerome in several places, more than need to be cited here.

“Quod autem infert: *Homo in dolore, et sciens ferre infirmitatem, sive virum dolorum, et scientem infirmitatem*, verum corpus hominis, et veram demonstrat animam.” *Hieron. in Is. cap. liii. tom. iii. p. 383.*

“Quod si opposuerint nobis hi, qui Christum negant humanam habuisse animam, sed in humano corpore Deum fuisse pro anima, audiant in Christo substantiam animæ demonstrari.” *Id. in Amos, cap. vi. ib. p. 1427.*

“Quod autem spiritus accipiat pro anima, manifeste significat Salvatoris oratio: *Pater, in manus tuas commendo spiritum meum*. Neque enim Jesus aut perversum spiritum, quod cogitare quoque nefas est, aut Spiritum sanctum, qui ipse Deus est, Patri poterat commendare, et non potius animam suam, de qua dixerat: *Tristis est anima mea usque ad mortem*. Matth. xxvi. 38. *Id. in Abac. cap. ii. ib. p. 1618.*

I shall not transcribe here anything from Augustin, but only refer you to one place in him. *Contr. Sermon. Arian. cap. ix. tom. 8.\**

I shall proceed no further at this time. I need not tell you, that the unity of God is an important article of natural religion. And after it has been so strongly asserted in the Jewish revelation, and has been as clearly taught in the New Testament†, it ought not to be given up by Christians.

\* That passage may be seen above, p. 8. note.

† See Mark xii. 29. Matth. xix. 17. Mark x. 18. John xvii. 3. Rom. xv. 6. xvi. 27. 1 Cor. viii. 6. 2 Cor. xii. 31. Eph. iv. 6. 1 Tim. ii. 5. vi. 15. 16. and elsewhere.

If, Papinian, you will bestow a few thoughts upon these papers, and send me the result of them, without compliment, and without resentment, you will oblige

**PHILALETHES.**

**THE END.**





# **FOUR DISCOURSES**

**UPON**

**PHILIPP. ii. 5—11.**





(4)

TWO  
SCHEMES OF A TRINITY  
CONSIDERED,  
AND THE  
DIVINE UNITY  
ASSERTED.

FOUR DISCOURSES UPON PHILIPP. ii. 5—11.

BY

NATHANIEL LARDNER, D.D.

Acts ii. 22. "Ye men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you, by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know."—Chap. v. 31. "Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins."—Chap. x. 37, 38. "That word you know, which was published throughout all Judæa, and began from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached: How God anointed," &c.

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## ADVERTISEMENT

[TO THE FIRST EDITION].

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THE Editor of the following *Discourses* accounts it no small happiness, that, by a late favourable accident, he has it in his power to present them to the Public. They shew themselves to have been part of a course of ministerial services; and a memorandum, under the Author's own hand, makes it probable that they were delivered from the pulpit to a very respectable society of Christians, so long ago as the year 1747.

The name of the Author, as he himself did not place it there, is not given in the title-page;—an omission, which the judicious reader, it is supposed, will reckon to be of no great moment. And, respecting the Author himself, it may be most truly observed, that he was always far from affecting, in any degree, the character or influence of a *Rabbi*, or dogmatical teacher; and could not, at any time, wish his name,—however justly endeared to many of his contemporaries, or sure to go down with distinguished esteem and honour to latest posterity,—should be accounted of the least weight, in the balance of reason, on any argument excepting that of *testimony*. He has now been several years re-

moved from our world, but, as the controversy to which these Discourses have respect, does still survive, and will, probably, be yet of long continuance, it cannot but be desirable, to all good minds, that the largest portion of this excellent spirit may be retained among us, communicated, and diffused ; in order that controversies of this nature, for the future, may be carried on, as our most candid Author has expressed it, “ without detriment either to truth or piety.”

It may, however, be apprehended, that to the curious and attentive readers who have been happily led into a previous acquaintance with his other valuable and most important works, these discourses will soon make a pleasing discovery of their Author. And all such readers, there is no doubt, will be glad to receive the following declaration concerning them, though anonymous.

They are here given, with a most strict care and fidelity, agreeable to the Author's own manuscript ; which he had drawn out fair, for the press, with particular directions designed for the printer. And any small additions, which a casual oversight seemed to make requisite, are distinguished, by being inclosed in brackets thus [ ].

Any attempt of the Editor, to recommend such Discourses as deserving the attention of the Public, could not well be exempted from a charge of officiousness. They are, therefore, cheerfully left to speak for themselves.

All Christians are agreed, that the subjects of which they treat are very weighty; and ecclesiastical history too sadly shews in what manner the contentions about them have been agitated.

Whatever may be the issue of the arguments suggested,—with respect to the measure of conviction they shall produce, in favour of any particular doctrine,—if the temper with which they are proposed, should prove sufficiently attractive to engage a general imitation, and excite a prevailing diligence to maintain and cultivate it, on all sides, the apparent chief design of the Author, and most fervent wishes of the Editor, will have their best accomplishment.

MAIDSTONE,

*Aug. 1, 1784.*

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## DISCOURSE I.

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PHILIPP. ii. 5—11 :

*Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus : who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God. But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men. And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also has highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name. That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth. And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

IN these verses, we have at large the Apostle's argument to the meekness and condescension before recommended : taken from the example of Christ's humility, and his exaltation, as a reward of it.

Within the compass of a few months, I have delivered two practical discourses from the fifth verse of this chapter, explaining the duty of mutual condescension and forbearance, and enforcing it from the example and the reward of the Lord Jesus Christ.

But now I am desirous to explain in a more critical manner the words which have been read to you.

I shall be hereby unavoidably led into somewhat



## 2 *The Scheme of a Trinity commonly received.*

controversial. But I hope it will be also practical, and not unprofitable; were it only instructive to some, who are not thoroughly acquainted with some controverted points, which yet are thought to be of much moment. Indeed, if people will decide in points of any kind, it is fit they should know and understand what they affirm; especially, if they take upon them to pass sentences upon those who differ from them. This needs no proof. Certainly no honest and upright man would willingly form a wrong judgment in any case, especially in such a case as this, where, if he be ignorant, he may pass sentence upon himself. I fear this is no uncommon thing. One cannot be disposed to insult any man's ignorance. But when censoriousness is joined therewith, and it becomes troublesome to others, it will be remarked. I think I have met with some good people, who have severely condemned *Arians*, and yet were not orthodox themselves. And if they could have been persuaded to explain their own notion, it would have appeared that they were in the *Arian* scheme, or very near it. But they were too positive, and too well satisfied of being in the right, to hear any argument from those who would have debated with them, and led them into the merits of the controversy.

Disputes about the person of Christ, and the doctrine of the Trinity, as is well known, have been exceedingly prejudicial to the Christian cause and interest; and chiefly so, because those disputes have been managed with too much heat: and contending parties, on both sides, have not been contented to

*The Scheme of a Trinity commonly received.* 3

dispute and argue, and then leave it to every one to determine conscientiously, according to the best of his own judgment; but would impose their own sense. And, if they had the authority, and civil power on their side, would require men under heavy pains and losses to profess, in word or writing, an assent to their opinion, whether convinced or not. Whereas serious and impartial, free and patient inquiries and debates, might have been instructive, and let in light, and different sentiments have been allowed, without detriment either to truth or piety.

I hope we may now have an example of this kind, and that all will hear with patience an argument, which is intended to be proposed with mildness, though with plainness, free from all reserve and disguise.

In order to understand this text, and to give free scope to every one to judge of its design, according to several apprehensions concerning the person of Christ, it will be needful to consider the several schemes of Divines relating to the doctrine of the Trinity. For, as Christians among us have before them, beside what is said in the Scriptures, divers determinations upon the doctrine of the Trinity, in catechisms, articles, and liturgies, they will apply those determinations to this, and other texts of Scripture.

I have therefore thought, that no method will more directly lead to a clear judgment in this point, than to propose and consider the common schemes, or ways of thinking of the Deity, which obtain among the professed disciples and followers of Jesus.

#### 4 *The Scheme of a Trinity commonly received.*

The first shall be that which is reckoned the commonly received scheme, and called orthodox and catholic.

In the Assembly's Catechism it is said, "There are three persons in the Godhead, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; the same in substance, equal in power and glory."

The first article of the Church of England is, "There is but one living and true God, everlasting, without body, parts, or passions, of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness, the maker and preserver of all things, both visible and invisible. And in the unity of this Godhead there be three persons, of one substance, power, and eternity, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost."

Here, certainly, ariseth a difficulty. How are we to understand these expressions? And how are they understood by those who use them, and approve of them, and assent to them, as right? *One God, three persons, the same in substance, equal in power and glory; or of one substance, power, and eternity.* Is it hereby meant, that there are three really distinct minds, or intelligent agents? So we might be apt to conclude from the use of the word *person*, and saying, that *these three are equal*.

Nevertheless, there are two different sentiments among those who are called orthodox. Some believe three distinct persons, or beings, of the same substance, or essence in kind: as three men are distinct, but are of the same kind of substance. Others do not understand the word *person* in the common acceptation. They believe only a modal distinction.

They openly say, that in discoursing on the mystery of the Trinity, they do not use the word *person* in what is now the common meaning of that word. We might be disposed to think that these went into the *Sabellian* scheme, which holds one person only in the Deity, under three different denominations. But yet they deny it, and disclaim *Sabellianism*, and speak of it as a very pernicious opinion. They say, that though the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, are not three distinct beings, or individuals, there is a distinction, which may be represented by that of three persons.

Here then are two different opinions among those who pass for orthodox.

And which is right? that is, which of these is the prevailing and generally received opinion? I answer the latter; [or the opinion of those] who hold only a modal distinction in the Trinity. This appears to me evident from what is called the *Athanasian Creed*,\* which is always allowed by those who bear the denomination of orthodox, to be the standard of the true doctrine of the Trinity. It is to this purpose: "The catholic faith is this; that we worship one God in Trinity—Trinity in unity; neither confounding the persons, nor dividing the substance.

\* I say *called the Athanasian Creed*, for it is now generally allowed by learned men, that it is not the work of the celebrated *Athanasius*, Bishop of *Alexandria*, who flourished in the fourth century, but of some other person long after his time. Nor is it certainly known by whom it was composed. For proof of this I refer to the Benedictine edition of *Athanasius's Works*, Tom. II. pp. 719, &c.

## 6 *The Scheme of a Trinity commonly received.*

For there is one person of the Father, another of the Son, and another of the Holy Ghost. But the Godhead of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, is all one; the glory equal, the majesty co-eternal. Such as the Father is, such is the Son, and such is the Holy Ghost.—The Father eternal, the Son eternal, and the Holy Ghost eternal. And yet there are not three eternals, but one eternal. As also there are not three incomprehensibles, nor three uncreated, but one uncreated, and one incomprehensible. So likewise the Father is almighty, the Son almighty, and the Holy Ghost almighty. And yet there are not three almighties, but one almighty. So the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Ghost is God. And yet there are not three gods, but one God.”

According to this Creed, there are *not three eternals, but one eternal, not three almighties, but one almighty*. So this seems to me. However, let every man judge for himself. And let every man who thinks himself orthodox, examine himself by this Creed, whether he be so or not. For it is not impossible that many well meaning people, of lower rank, may believe a real Trinity of distinct intelligent beings. Yea, it is likely that this is indeed the firm belief and persuasion of great numbers of the vulgar sort among Christians. It may be also the sentiment of some who make no small figure in the learned world.

Nevertheless, I do not think that to be what is called the commonly received doctrine of the Church. This appears to me evident from the forecited Creed.

Before we proceed to apply this doctrine to the words of the text, it may be proper to observe still more distinctly the received doctrine concerning the Son. The second article of the Church of England is thus: "The Son, which is the word of the Father, begotten from everlasting of the Father, the very and eternal God, of one substance with the Father, took man's nature in the womb of the blessed virgin, of her substance; so that two whole and perfect natures, that is, the Godhead and Manhood, were joined together in one person, never to be divided. Whereof is one Christ, very God, and very man; who truly suffered, was dead, and buried."

I have taken the words of that article, that I may be sure to avoid all misrepresentation, and that there may be no suspicion of it.

Let us now observe the explication of the text, agreeably to this scheme, which I shall take in the words of a pious annotator.\* "‘Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.’ As Christ denied himself for you, so should you for others. ‘Who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God:’ that is, who being the essential image of the Father, and enjoying the Divine essence and nature, with all its glory, knew that it was no usurpation in him to account himself so, and carry himself as such. ‘But made himself of no reputation.’ Yet he emptied himself of that divine glory and majesty, by hiding it in the veil of his flesh: ‘and took upon him the form of a ser-

\* Mr. Samuel Clarke’s Annotations upon the place.

8 *The Scheme of a Trinity commonly received.*

vant :’ that is, the quality and condition of a mean person, not of some great man. ‘And was made in the likeness of men :’ that is, subject to all the frailties and infirmities of human nature, sin only excepted. ‘And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself.’ By what appeared to all, and by the whole tenour of his carriage, he was found to be a true man. ‘And became obedient unto death, even unto the death of the cross.’ He manifested his obedience, as in all other particulars, so in resigning up himself to death, the death of the cross, the most cruel, contemptible, and accursed death. ‘Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name.’ Wherefore God advanced his human nature to the highest degree of glory, and has given him honour, authority, and majesty, above all created excellence.”

Upon this interpretation it is easy to remark, that it does not seem exactly to answer the Apostle’s expressions. It supposes two things to be spoken of, first the Deity, then the humanity of Jesus. I say, it is supposed, that the Apostle first speaks of Christ’s being *of the divine nature and essence*, and therein humbling himself. And the human nature is exalted. Whereas the Apostle seems to speak all along of one thing or person. “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, who made himself of no reputation.—Wherefore God also has highly exalted him, and given him a name above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow.” He who had humbled himself is exalted. Nor can true Deity either be abased or rewarded.

There is therefore no small difficulty in applying the commonly received opinion concerning Christ, as God, of the same substance, and equal with the Father, to this text. Or, it is not easy to reconcile the doctrine of the Apostle in this place, and the commonly received opinion concerning the Trinity.

I shall now conclude with these two remarks.

I. The commonly received doctrine of the Trinity, which is reckoned orthodox, and the doctrine of the Church, is obscure. Indeed, it is generally acknowledged to be very mysterious. And it appears to be so from the authentic accounts which have been now given of it. For it is said, that there are *three persons in the Godhead, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost* : and they are said to be *equal in power and glory*. Which expressions seem to intimate, that there are three distinct beings, and minds. But yet, on the other hand, it is as plainly said, that there is *but one eternal, and one almighty*.

These expressions must be allowed to represent an obscure doctrine. Some have said that it is contradictory.

All I affirm is, that it is obscure, and difficult to be conceived and understood, if it be not absolutely incomprehensible.

II. Secondly, I would observe, that obscure doctrines ought not to be made necessary to salvation. They who consider the general tenour and great design of the preaching of Christ and his apostles to all sorts of men, in order to bring them to repentance and holiness, and thereby to everlasting happiness, by the good will and appointment of God, will be



## 10 *The Scheme of a Trinity commonly received.*

easily led to think, that there should not be any doctrines necessary to be believed, which are of such a nature, that the most metaphysical and philosophical minds can scarcely know what they are, or reconcile them to reason. Therefore the commonly received doctrine of the Trinity, if it be obscure, should not be made a necessary article of a Christian's faith. And yet this is the introduction to the Athanasian Creed: "Whosoever will be saved, before all things it is necessary that he hold the Catholic faith. Which faith, except every one do keep whole and undefiled, without doubt he shall perish everlastingly. And the Catholic faith is this, that we worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in unity:" and the rest. And the more fully to enforce the necessity of this doctrine, it is repeated again at the end. "This is the Catholic faith; which, except a man believe faithfully, he cannot be saved."

This, and other like Creeds, are inserted in almost all the established articles and liturgies in Christendom.

But is not this teaching uncharitableness by authority? And, if any join in such offices of religion, whilst they believe not the Creeds which they recite, or are supposed to recite, they are made to pass sentences of condemnation upon themselves.

How great, then, is the privilege, to be at liberty to choose our religion, and that way of worship which, upon a serious consideration, and after careful and impartial examination, we think to be reasonable, scriptural, and edifying!

## DISCOURSE II.

---

PHILIPP. ii. 5—11 :

*Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.*  
And what follows.

IN a late discourse on this text, I stated and considered the commonly received opinion concerning the Trinity, and the person of Christ in particular.

I now intend to consider another sentiment concerning the person of Christ, and consequently also concerning the Trinity.

Some, then, suppose, the Son to be a spirit, or intelligent agent, subordinate and inferior to the Father. They think, that this is what is meant by the Word, spoken of by St. John, at the beginning of his Gospel. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God:" or a God, as they would translate: not the same with the Father, or equal to him, or of the same nature and essence: but said to be God, on account of his great excellence and power, derived to him by the will of the Father. "All things were made by him," that is, by him, under the Father, as his instrument, and by his appointment. "And without him was not any thing made that was made."

To the like purpose they understand and explain Col. i. 15. 16: "Who is the image of the invisible

God, the first born of every creature. For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible ; whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers. All things were created by him, and for him.

Which words are thus paraphrased by an ingenious and learned Commentator\* of the sentiment which I am now endeavouring to represent as fairly as may be : “ Since he is the most lively visible image of the Father who is the invisible God, and is the first being that was derived from him. And that he must be the first derived from him, is from hence evident, that all other beings were derived from God, the primary and supreme cause of all, through this his Son, by whom, as their immediate author, all things were created, that are in heaven, or that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers. All things were created by him, and to be in subjection to him. He therefore must be before all things. And by him all things are preserved. And he is the head of the Church, which is his body.”

Heb. i. 1, 2. “ God hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds.” In his notes upon these last words, the same learned expositor says, “ As from other places it appears, that Christ was employed in making the world, so this seems most agreeable to the scope of the writer

\* Mr. James Peirce.

of the Epistle to the Hebrews. His intention appears to be to give the loftiest and most noble account of his greatness and dignity, abstractedly from what he proceeds to afterwards, the honour conferred upon him at his resurrection. Now, since he so expressly mentions that which may seem a less instance of his greatness, that *he upholds all things*; it is not probable that he would omit that which was greater, God's creating the worlds by him."

Of the Word, or Son of God, these learned men do also generally understand Prov. viii. 22—31.

Well, then, the Son being, according to this scheme, the first derived being, and God having made the world by him; what was the station, what the employment, what the dignity of the Son of God before his incarnation?

The learned annotator before quoted, in his notes upon Phil. ii. 9, says, "The Scriptures seem to represent this to have been the state of things antecedently to our Saviour's coming into the world; that God allotted to the angels provinces and dominions, one being appointed to preside over one country, and another over another.—The places, as evidences of this, are all taken out of Dan. x., where is related a vision of an angel sent to Daniel in the third year of Cyrus, King of Persia.—Thus he speaks, ver. 13: 'The prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me one and twenty days: but lo, Michael, one, or the first of the chief princes, came to help me.'—Afterwards, in the two last verses of that chapter, the same angel says, 'Now will I re-

turn to fight with the prince of Persia. And when I am gone forth, lo, the prince of Græcia shall come. But I will shew thee what is noted in the Scripture of truth. And there is none that holdeth with me in these things, but Michael your prince.' So that, as this learned writer proceeds, we have here the prince of *Persia*, the prince of *Græcia*, and the prince of the *Jews*, spoken of. And what reason can we have to question, whether the like was not the case of the other countries, that they had in like manner their respective presidents or princes? This leads us farther to consider the state of our Saviour himself before his incarnation.—As the Heathen nations were committed to other angels, the Israelites were committed to Christ, who was the angel of the covenant, or of God's covenanted people." So that learned writer.

There may be different conceptions concerning Christ among those who must be allowed to be in the main of this opinion. They all suppose the Word, or Son of God, to be a being distinct from God the Father, subordinate and inferior to him. But some may ascribe to him higher dignity than others. [And] we have just now seen that one and the same person, who thinks that all things were made by the Son, supposeth him before his incarnation to have had only, or chiefly, the care and government of the Jewish people allotted to him; whilst other angels were appointed presidents or princes of other nations and countries.

One thing ought to be added here. They who are of this sentiment do generally suppose that this

great being, the Word, the Son of God, upon our Saviour's conception and birth, animated the body prepared for him. So that our Saviour had not, properly, a human soul. But the Word, the Son of God, supplied the place of a soul.

The Spirit, or Holy Ghost, the learned men of this sentiment, I presume, take to be a being, or intelligent agent, inferior in power and perfection, not only to God the Father, but likewise to the Son of God.

According to these, therefore, the Father is the one supreme God over all, absolutely eternal, underrived, unchangeable, independent.

The Son is the first derived being from the Father, and under him employed in creating, and also preserving and upholding the world, with, as some say, an especial allotment of the presidentship over the people of Israel.

The Spirit is a third person, also derived from the Father, and of power and perfection inferior to the Son.

I have endeavoured to give here, as well as elsewhere, a true representation. If I have mistaken, it is not done willingly and designedly. And I shall be ready to be better informed.

Let us now apply this scheme to the text; or see how it is explained by the favourers of this sentiment. And I hope to have here again the assistance of the same learned divine and commentator who has been quoted already several times.

Vers. 5, 6: "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who being in the form of God,

thought it not robbery to be equal with God.' Ye ought to be of such a kind and beneficent, of such a humble and condescending disposition, as Christ Jesus himself was : who being in the form or likeness of God, was not eager in retaining that likeness to God."

The *form of God* is farther explained in this manner, p. 26 : " He was in the form or likeness of God, upon account of that authority, dominion, and power, with which he was entrusted, and which he exercised antecedently to his coming into the world. —Our Saviour, antecedently to his incarnation, having the Jews committed to him of God, and being prince of that people, or the king of Israel, was in the form and likeness of God.

" Who, being in the form or likeness of God, was not eager in retaining that likeness to God. But, on the contrary, he emptied himself of that form of God, taking upon him a very different form or likeness, even that of a servant, when he was made in the likeness of men."

And for explaining this last particular it is added by the same interpreter, in his notes, " If it be here inquired, why does St. Paul say, *he was in the likeness of men*? Was he not truly and properly a man? The answer is easy, that *men* signifies such animated bodies as ours are, inhabited each by a rational soul. And so, as to his body, he was in all respects a man, just as we are, he having taken part with us in flesh and blood, and having a body prepared for him. The *likeness*, therefore, belongs not to that, but to the other part of man, the το ἡγεμονικόν,

the rational spirit ; wherein he was vastly more than man, the Word or Logos, that was in the form of God, being so transcendently superior to the most noble soul that ever inhabited any other human flesh.

“ ‘ And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient to death, even the death of the cross.’ And though his becoming man was a great instance of humility and condescension, yet he did not stop at that ; but when he was [actually] in the same condition and state with men, he humbled himself yet farther by becoming obedient to God unto death, and that too the death of the cross, which was attended with the greatest reproach as well as torment.”

“ Vers. 9—11 : ‘ Wherefore God also has highly exalted him, and given him a name, which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things on earth, and things under the earth : and that every tongue should confess, that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.’ And upon this account God has advanced him higher than before, and freely bestowed on him an authority that is superior to what he ever granted to any other ; that by virtue of the authority of Jesus all should be constrained to submit to God ; whether they are heavenly or earthly [beings], or such as are under the earth ; and that every tongue should acknowledge, that Jesus Christ is, by this gift of God, Lord of all, to the glory of God the Father.”

This exaltation, or superior exaltation of Christ



above what he had before, is illustrated by the same learned expositor, in his notes after this manner : “ When our Lord came into the world, he laid aside that form of God he was in before, and was made for a little time, that is, till his resurrection, lower than the angels, they still continuing their dominion while he parted with his. At our Lord’s resurrection an entire change was made in this state of things, and an end was put to this rule of angels ; they themselves, together with all nations, were put under one head, even Christ, whose authority and power was then so highly advanced above what it was before ; he being entrusted with an universal dominion, and all that were rulers and governors before being made his subjects and ministers.”

I have been the longer in representing this scheme, that I might shew it to as much advantage as possible. And now I shall propose some objections to it.

One observation, which I mention in the first place, relates to a particular article in this scheme.

It is not reasonable that the Word, the Son of God, the first derived being, who had been employed under God the Father in making all things, should, some time after the world was made, have so limited dominion and authority, as to be the president and governor of the Jewish people only ; whilst other angels had like power and dominion over other people and countries.

What reason can be assigned why the being who, under God the Father, had been creator of all things, visible and invisible, should be put quite, or well

nigh, upon a level with his creatures? There is no ground, from reason or Scripture, to believe any voluntary or imposed humiliation of the Son of God before his incarnation.

I might likewise ask what reason can be assigned, why any good angels should, after our Lord's resurrection and ascension, be deprived of any advantages which they before enjoyed? For it may be well supposed, that if they were acquainted with our Lord's transactions here on earth, by the will of the Father, for the good of mankind, they approved, admired, and applauded them. And some of the angels may have been, yea, were employed in attending upon, and ministering to Jesus, whilst he dwelt on this earth.

However, this may be reckoned by some to be an exception only to the scheme of the learned commentator before cited. I therefore place these observations here by themselves.

But for the present setting that aside, all, I think, who are in this scheme, that the Word, the Son of God, is a distinct being inferior to God the Father, suppose that he was employed under God the Father, in creating the heavens, and the earth, and all things that are therein; that afterwards he was incarnate, humbled himself, suffered and died, and was exalted.

Against this scheme, then, as distinguished from the foregoing particular, (though that has been introduced as a plausible supposition,) I object, as follows :

1. The Lord Jesus, in the New Testament, is

often spoken of as *a man* ; which means a being with a reasonable soul and human body. But, if the Word, a transcendently great and excellent spirit, far superior to human souls, animated the body of Jesus, as a soul, then our Lord was not, properly speaking, a man : though this be often said in scripture, and spoken of as a thing of importance. I do not now allege any texts by way of proof. There may be occasion to produce them distinctly in another place.

2. It appears to be an impropriety, and incongruity, that any spirit, except a human soul, should animate a human body. It would, I apprehend, be an incongruity not paralleled in any of the works of God, of which we have any knowledge.

3. Jesus Christ, as we evidently know from his history in the Gospels, had all the innocent, sinless infirmities of the human nature. He was weary with journeyings, he hungered, and had thirst, he needed the refreshment of food, and of rest, or sleep : and he endured pain, and at some times piercing affliction and grief, and at last died.

But this could not have been, supposing the body of Jesus to have been animated by so transcendently powerful and active a spirit as the Word, or the Son of God, in this scheme is supposed to be. He could not have been diminished or weakened thereby. Supposing such an union of so great a spirit with a human body, it would swallow it up. I mean, that spirit would not be straitened, and confined, or diminished, by the body, but would infuse vigour and activity into the body : so that it would

be no longer liable to the weaknesses to which human bodies, actuated only by human souls, are incident. How can a spirit, creator of all things under God the Father, be straitened and incommoded by so small a portion of matter, which was originally created by him? Will the residence of so great a spirit in a human body make no alteration? Shall that body be still as feeble, as liable to wants, and as sensible to pain, as an ordinary body, which has only a human soul?

4. We do not perceive the Lord Jesus to insist upon his pre-existent greatness and glory, as an argument of obedience to his doctrine. He does not represent himself to those who were his hearers, as their creator under God. But he says, that *the Father had sent him*, that he acted by commission under God, and that the Father had *sealed* him, by the miraculous works which he had enabled him to do, and that he had authority from him to do and teach as he did.

5. If so glorious a being, as the Word, or Son of God, is represented to be in this scheme, had taken upon himself a human body, and submitted to animate and act in it, as a soul; that condescension would have been clearly and frequently shewn, and insisted on in the Gospels and Epistles. It would have been as much enlarged upon, as our Lord's resurrection and ascension. But there are no clear texts asserting this: none but what are capable of another sense, and are better interpreted in a different manner.

6. In this way Jesus Christ is no example of

imitation to us : for no such thing, as the condescension just represented, is required of us. We are not taught to be willing to descend into some inferior species of beings, and therein to be debilitated, and incommoded, and lose all our rationality, for a while at least. But what we are taught is, that we should act modestly and meekly in the condition assigned us, and in which God has made us.

7. If the body of Jesus had been animated by so great a spirit, as its soul, there would have been nothing at all extraordinary in his resurrection and ascension. And yet how does the Apostle labour in describing this great instance of divine power? Eph. i. 19, 20, "that ye may know what is the exceeding greatness of his power to usward, who believe, according to the working of his mighty power: which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places." But what is there extraordinary in it, that a being who, under God, had made the world, should be raised up, and ascend, and be seated in the heavenly places, where he had been long before?

8. Once more: this doctrine of the transcendent glory and power of Christ before his coming into the world, is inconsistent with the representations given throughout Scripture of his exaltation after his death, as a reward of his humility and obedience upon earth. For the text, agreeably to many others, says, "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him." But there is no exaltation, to which any being can be advanced, that would exceed what the Creator

was entitled to, as such. Has he not, as Creator, under God, of all things visible and invisible, a natural right to dominion and authority over them, and to precedence before and above all others? How, then, could dominion and authority over all things be the reward of Christ's humility, and patience, and other virtues here on earth?

What adds weight to this consideration is, that this doctrine weakens, and even destroys, the argument set before us to humility and meekness, which is taken from the exaltation of Jesus. For, according to it, he has no advancement, and indeed could have no advancement, after all he had done here, but what he was entitled to without it.

I must not stay to state and answer objections. But there is one text so likely to occur to the thoughts of many, that it may be best to take notice of it. It is in the prayer recorded John xvii. where at ver. 5, is this petition of our Lord: "And now, O Father, glorify thou me with the glory which I had with thee before the world was." If any should urge this text, as an objection against some things just said, I would answer, The most likely meaning of these words is to this purpose: Our Lord was here approaching to the affecting scene of his last sufferings, and the conclusion of his life here on earth, in which he had acted with great zeal and faithfulness, for the glory of God, and the good of men. And having so fulfilled the commission given him, he solemnly and humbly addresses God, saying, "I have glorified thee on earth. I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.

And now, O Father, glorify thou me with the glory which I had with thee, before the world was :” that is, which had been always, and from the beginning, designed for me. So Rev. xiii. 8, “the lamb slain,” that is, designed to be slain, “before the foundation of the world.” Eph. i. 4, “According as he has chosen us in him before the foundation of the world.” Col. iii. 3, “Your life is hid with Christ in God.” See also Eph. iii. 9, and Matt. xxv. 34, and other like places. So the glory which was to be the reward of what Jesus should do on earth, was always with God. It was *with him* in his purpose: “hid with him before the world was.” To the like effect St. Augustin\* very largely. And if there is any reward annexed to our Lord’s services and sufferings here on earth, (as certainly there is,) very probably that is what is here intended.

These things I have now proposed to your consideration. I do not dictate. But let it be considered, whether this scheme be not attended with difficulties. Many pious and learned men may have taken it up, for avoiding difficulties in the com-

\* Cum ergo videret illius prædestinatæ suæ clarificationis venisse jam tempus, ut et nunc fieret in redditione, quod fuerat in prædestinatione jam factum, oravit, dicens, *Et nunc clarifica me, tu Pater, apud teipsum, claritate quam habui priusquam mundus esset, apud te*: tanquam diceret, claritatem quam habui apud te; id est, illam claritatem quam habui apud te in prædestinatione tuâ, tempus est, ut apud te habeam etiam vivens in dexterâ tuâ. *In Joan. Evang. Cap. xvii. Tract. 105, p. 8, Tom. III. Bened. p. 2.*

monly received doctrine. Nevertheless, this also may be found to have difficulties that must weaken the persuasion of its truth and probability.

God willing, I intend to represent another opinion hereafter. For the present I shall conclude with the following remarks.

We may hence receive instruction. We should not be too much opinionated of ourselves, because we know more truths than others. Let us rather suppose that we may be mistaken ; sensible, that in many points of speculation there are difficulties, which may be overlooked by us ; and that our scheme may be liable to objections, which we have not observed. Neither all wisdom, nor all truth, is monopolized by any one man, or sect of men. He who has gained truth fairly, by impartial and laborious examination and inquiry, will be under little temptation to insult or despise others, whom he thinks to be in error or ignorance, if they be but open to conviction. He knows that things appear in different lights to different persons, and to the same person at different times. He has, perhaps, been positive in some points, which he has afterwards seen to be mistaken opinions, though he was all the while sincere. He must therefore allow the innocence of error in some cases. Let us not be too desirous that others should agree with us in opinion. Let us love and honour them, if they are honest and virtuous ; which many may be, who are not of the same sentiment with us, and see not things in the same light that we do. If we desire to experience moderation from others, let us shew



it ourselves, as there is occasion. Let not our faith, or knowledge, or opinion of it, produce arrogance and censoriousness. But, as St. James directs, if we are wise men, and endued with knowledge, let us shew out of a good conversation our works with meekness of wisdom. Jas. iii. 13. Or, let us shew our wisdom by a truly pious and virtuous conversation, and by meekness of behaviour towards others.

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## DISCOURSE III.

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PHILIPP. ii. 5—11 :

*Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.*  
And what follows.

I HAVE proposed to explain this text largely and distinctly. And though this design may lead me to be somewhat controversial, and to treat some points which are, and long have been, disputed among Christians, I have hoped that I should have no reason to decline freedom and plainness of expression. It is very common for men in public, as well as private discourses, to assert their own sentiment, and to refute, or do what lies in their power to refute, the schemes and sentiments of others. Nor is it uncommon for men of low rank and condition to think themselves capable judges of what are reckoned the most sublime and mysterious doctrines, and to pass sentences, not very favourable, upon those who are of a different opinion from themselves. There cannot be, then, I apprehend, any sufficient reason to condemn an attempt to represent in a fair and impartial manner divers sentiments concerning the Deity and the person of Christ, together with the reasons and arguments by which they are supported.

I have already considered two schemes concern-

ing the Deity, and a Trinity, and the person of Christ: one, that which is reckoned the commonly received opinion, or orthodox: the other, sometimes called *Arianism*. The third, to be now considered, is sometimes called the doctrine of the *Unitarians*, or the *Nazareans*. These believe, that there is one God alone, even the Father, eternal, almighty, possessed of all perfections without any defects or limits, unchangeable, the creator of all things visible and invisible, the supreme Lord and Governor of the world, whose providential care upholds all things; who spoke to the Patriarchs in the early ages of the world, to the people of Israel by Moses and other Prophets, and in these latter ages of the world to all mankind by Jesus Christ, and by him will distribute equal recompences to all, according to their behaviour in this world.

For farther illustrating this point, it will be proper to shew more distinctly the opinion of those persons concerning God the Father, or the Divine Unity, the person of Christ, and the Holy Spirit.

*First*, concerning God the Father, or the Divine Unity; which appears to be the doctrine of the Old and New Testament, from the beginning to the end.

Moses, the Jewish Lawgiver, and their greatest Prophet before the gospel dispensation, begins his five books with an account of the creation of the world.

The first of the ten commandments delivered with so great solemnity to the Jewish people, soon after their deliverance from Egyptian bondage, and

before they were put in possession of *Canaan*, as a distinct and independent nation and people, is, "I am the Lord thy God, who have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before me:"\* that is, before my face, in my sight, to which all things are open, from whom no deviation from this law can be hid, and will be overlooked, and unresented. In the fourth of those ten laws or commandments, it is said, "Remember the sabbath day to keep it holy. For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day."†

After the rehearsal of those commandments, and other things, in the book of Deuteronomy it is said, "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord."‡

Ps. lxxxiii. 18. "That men may know, that thou, whose name alone is Jehovah, art the most high over all the earth."

Is. xl. 28. "Hast thou not known, hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, nor his weary?"

Is. xlv. 6. "Thus saith the Lord, the king of Israel, and his Redeemer, the Lord of Hosts: I am the first, and I am the last: and beside me there is no God."—Ver. 8. "Is there a God beside me? Yea, there is no God. I know not any." Ver. 24. "Thus saith the Lord, thy Redeemer, and he that formed thee from the womb: I am the Lord that

\* Exod. xx. 1, 2.

† Ver. 10, 11.

‡ Deut. vi. 4.

maketh all things, that stretcheth forth the heavens alone, that spreadeth abroad the earth by myself."

Such, then, is the doctrine of the Old Testament. There is one God, even *Jehovah*, eternal, unchangeable, the creator of the heavens and the earth, and all things therein, the Lord, God, and King, of Israel.

Let us now observe the doctrine of the New Testament, which, if from heaven, cannot be different, but must be harmonious with that of the Old.

Matt. iv. 9, 10. When Satan tempted our Lord, and said, "All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me; Jesus said unto him, Get thee hence, Satan. For it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve."\*

Mark xii. 28—34. "And one of the scribes came, and asked him, Which is the first commandment of all? And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord. And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength. This is the first commandment. And the scribe said unto him, Well, Master, thou hast said the truth. For there is one God, and there is none other but he. And when Jesus saw that he answered discreetly, he said, Thou art not far from the kingdom of God."†

Luke xviii. 18, 19. "And a certain ruler asked

\* See Deut. vi. 13, and x. 20.

† See Deut. vi. 4, 5.

him, saying, Good Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? There is none good, save one, that is God."

John xvii. 1—3. "These words spake Jesus, and lift up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee: as thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. And this is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent."

Our Lord, therefore, we see, prays to God, even the Father, his *Father and our Father, his God and our God*;\* and gives to him the character of *the only true God*.

It might be here not improperly observed farther, that God, even the Father, is he, in whose name, and by whose authority, our Lord professed to act, whose will he did, to whom he resigned himself, whose glory, ultimately, and above all things, he sought, and not his own.

John v. 30. "I can of my own self do nothing. As I hear I judge. And my judgment is just, because I seek not my own will, but the will of the Father which sent me." Ver. 36. "But I have greater witness than that of John. For the works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father

\* See John xx. 17.

hath sent me." Ver. 43. "I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not."

John vii. 16. "Jesus answered them, and said, My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me."

John xii. 49. "For I have not spoken of myself. But the Father which sent me, he gave me commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak."

The Apostles of Christ were unanimous, and after their Lord's resurrection, and ascension to heaven, prayed and preached as he had done.

Acts iii. 12, 13. After the healing of the lame man that sat at the gate of the temple, the people ran together to Peter and John. "When Peter saw it, he answered unto the people, Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this? The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, has glorified his son Jesus, whom ye delivered up." It is the God of the Patriarchs and Prophets, in whose name they act, by whom, they supposed, their miracles were wrought, for confirming the authority and doctrine of Jesus.

Afterwards, when delivered from a great danger, Acts iv. 23—30, "And being let go, they went to their own company, and reported all that the chief-priests and elders had said unto them. And when they heard that, they lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and said, Lord, thou art God, which hast made heaven and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is.—And now, Lord, behold their threatenings, and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness

they may speak thy word, by stretching forth thine hand to heal, and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child, servant, Jesus." And chap. v. 29—31, before the whole Jewish council : " Then Peter and the other Apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men. The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree. Him hath God exalted with his right hand, to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins."

Thus they ascribe the gospel dispensation to the one God, creator of heaven and earth, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and of the people of Israel.

To the same God the Apostles offer up prayers and praises in their epistles.

Says St. Paul, Ephes. iii. 14, " For this cause I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." And St. Peter, 1 Epist. i. 3. " Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." Eph. v. 20. " Giving thanks always for all things unto God, even the Father, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ."

In many other places of their epistles the Apostles expressly teach, that there is but one God, even the Father.

1 Cor. viii. 4—6. " We know that an idol is nothing, and that there is none other God but one. For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or on earth, (as there be gods many and lords many,) yet to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him, and



one Lord Jesus Christ, (by whom are all things,) and we by him."

2 Cor. xi. 31. "The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ: or God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is blessed for evermore, knoweth that I lie not."

1 Tim. i. 17. "Now unto the King eternal, immortal, and invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever."

1 Tim. vi. 15, 16. "Which in his time he shall shew, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords, who only hath immortality. To whom be honour and power everlasting."

Jude 25. "To the only wise God, our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, now and ever."

Ephes. iv. 5, 6. "There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all."

And in this second chapter of the epistle to the Philippians we are assured, that our Lord has been exalted, "that every tongue should confess, that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

From all which it is concluded, that there is one God, even the Father.

In the next place we are to observe, what is the sentiment of these persons concerning our blessed Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ.

And in short, their sentiment is, that he is a man, with a reasonable soul and human body, especially favoured of God.

Of which there are these proofs. He was born of a woman.

We have an account of our Lord's nativity in two Evangelists, both agreeing that he was born of a virgin, and *conceived by the Holy Ghost*, as it is expressed in the Apostles' creed. Matt. i. 18—25. "Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise. Whereas his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost.—Joseph, her husband, was minded to put her away privily. But while he thought on these things, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife. For that which is conceived in her, is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son. And thou shalt call his name Jesus. Then Joseph, being raised from sleep, did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him; and took unto him his wife. And knew her not till she had brought forth her first-born son. And he called his name Jesus."

St. Luke i. 26, 27, 30—32: "The angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, to a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David, and the virgin's name was Mary.—And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary, for thou hast found favour with God. And behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest. And the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David." Must not this be

reckoned full proof, that Jesus was a man, and that it was designed to represent him to us as such? Not made as Adam, but born of a woman, not in the ordinary way of generation, but of a virgin, by the immediate operation and miraculous power of God. See Luke i. 35

Nor may it be amiss to observe here, that in the forecited Evangelists are two pedigrees of Jesus : one carrying his genealogy up to David and Abraham, and the other as high as to Adam, to satisfy us of his humanity, and to shew the fulfilment of the Divine promises concerning the great person who was to come, and that Jesus was *the seed of the woman* who should bruise the serpent's head—*the seed of Abraham*, in whom all the families of the earth should be blessed, and the *son of David*, in whom the everlasting kingdom, promised to that patriarch, should be established.

Jesus likewise, being a man, experienced many dangers in the time of his infancy ; notwithstanding which his life was wonderfully preserved. Being returned safe from Egypt, Joseph and Mary settled again in Galilee in their own city Nazareth. And it is observed by St. Luke, ii. 40, "And the child\* grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon him." The same evangelist also having given an account of his going with his parents to Jerusalem at the feast of the passover, when he was twelve years of age, adds (chap. ii. 51, 52), that "he went down with

\* Το δε παιδιον ημεραι.

them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject to them.—And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.”

It might be observed, that when our Lord appeared publicly in the world, and by his words and works shewed himself to be the Messiah, he called himself *the son of man* ; and they who believed in him, respectfully addressed him in the character of *the son of David*.

Through the whole course of his ministry we perceive him to have had all the innocent infirmities of human nature. In the end he died, and was raised from the dead, in testimony to the truth of the important doctrine taught by him, and as a pattern of that resurrection of which he assured his faithful followers.

St. Peter, preaching to the Jews at Jerusalem, soon after our Lord's resurrection and ascension, says, (Acts ii. 22,) “Ye men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you, by miracles, wonders, and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know, him God hath raised up.”

St. Paul, preaching at Athens, says, (Acts xvii. 31,) “God hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained.”

Gal. iv. 4. “When the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law.”

1 Tim. ii. 5. “For there is one God, and one

mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus."

2 Tim. ii. 8. "Remember that Jesus Christ, of the seed of David, was raised from the dead, according to my gospel."

The apostle to the Hebrews (a great part of whose design in that epistle is to represent the great dignity of Jesus over Moses, and as exalted highly after his resurrection and ascension to heaven) does as clearly and fully assert the human nature of Jesus, as any writer of the New Testament.

The argument in Heb. ii. 14—18, must be understood to imply true and perfect humanity of soul as well as body. "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil: and deliver them, who through fear of death were all their life-time subject to bondage. For verily he took not on him the nature of angels. But he took on him the seed of Abraham." The meaning is, For he is not the deliverer of angels, but of the seed of Abraham. "Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest, in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted:" or, in chap. iv. 15, "For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but

was in all things tempted like as we are, yet without sin." In order to be tempted like as we are, he must have been like us, having a reasonable [human] soul and [human] body.

The apostle likewise in the former part of that second chapter of the epistle to the Hebrews goes upon the supposition of the Lord Jesus being a man. Ver. 5—9 : " For unto the angels hath he not put in subjection the world to come, of which we speak : but one in a certain place," meaning Ps. viii., " testified, saying, What is man, that thou art mindful of him ? or the son of man, that thou visitest him ? Thou madest him a little lower than the angels ; thou crownedst him with glory and honour, and didst set him over the works of thy hands. Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet.— But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour ; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man."

Well, then, [may] they of this scheme, from these and other texts, conclude Jesus to be a man,\* with a

\* " *Christ* is called the son of man, not to deny his godhead, but to express the verity of his human nature, and that he was of our stock and lineage. He might have been true man, though he had not come of Adam, but his human nature had been framed out of the dust of the ground, as Adam's was, or created out of nothing. 'But he that sanctifieth, and they that are sanctified, are of one. For which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren.' Heb. ii. 11. He would be of the mass and stock with us." Dr. Thos. Manton upon Luke xix. 1, Vol. IV. p. 883.

"They are said to be of one. This denotes the union that

reasonable human soul, and human body, born of the virgin Mary by the especial interposition of God himself. Which leads us to the other thing, that God was with him.

That special favour and privilege is variously expressed. In the discourse of Peter at the house of Cornelius, before referred to, Acts x. 36—38: "That word which God sent unto the children of Israel,—which was published throughout Judæa, and began from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached; how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost, and with power, who went about doing good, and healing all that were possessed of the devil, for God was with him."

John the Baptist, near the conclusion of his ministry, bears this testimony to Jesus: "He whom God hath sent, speaketh the words of God. For God giveth not the spirit by measure unto him." John iii. 34.

is between them. They are of one stock and lineage, or one common parent of mankind. Hence Luke carrieth up the genealogy of Christ unto Adam. Luke ii. 38. So that he is of our kind and nature." Manton upon Heb. ii. 11, p. 1083.

Afterwards, "Christ is our kinsman; not only true man, but the son of man. True man he might have been, if God had created him out of nothing, or he had brought his substance from heaven. But he is the son of man, one descended from the loins of Adam, as we are. And so does redeem us, not only *jure proprietatis*, by virtue of his interest in us, as our Creator; but *jure propinquitatis*, by virtue of kindred, as one of our stock and lineage; as the son of man, as well as the son of God. For Jesus Christ, of all the kindred, was the only one that was free, and able to pay a ransom for us." As before, p. 1084.

Matt. i. 22, 23. "Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled, which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, A virgin shall conceive, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which, being interpreted, is, God with us."

Col. ii. 9. "For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily," or really.

Which is much the same with what is observed by the evangelist John, i. 14: "And the word was made flesh, and dwelt among us. And we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."

And all these expressions in the New Testament are agreeable to the descriptions of the Messiah in ancient prophecy. So Isa. xi. 1, 2: "And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots. And the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him; the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge, and of the fear of the Lord."

Which is the very same with what John Baptist calls "giving the spirit without measure," (John iii. 34,) and the same with "the spirit's abiding on him, and remaining on him;" see John i. 32, 33.

For clearing up this matter, it should be observed, that they who are of this opinion do not understand by the Son of God an intelligent spirit, equal with God the Father, and of the same substance and power, nor an angelical or superangelical spirit,



formed before the creation of this material and visible world; but, in their apprehension, it is the man Jesus who is the son of God. And the Son of God, by way of eminence and distinction, or the well-beloved son of God, and only begotten son of God, as they suppose, are all terms of equivalent import and meaning, denoting the Messiah.

When there came a voice from heaven, or from the most glorious majesty, or the presence of God, saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him:" they think this to be the same as a solemn declaration, that Jesus was the promised Messiah, the Saviour of the world, who knew, and was to reveal, the will of God to others, in a more perfect manner than any of the prophets had done.

The Son of God, or the only begotten Son of God, is the man most dear to God. He is the Christ. And the Christ, and the Son of God, are the same.

When God sent Moses back to Egypt, from whence he had fled, he was charged with this commission (Exod. iv. 22, 23): "Thus shalt thou say unto Pharaoh, Thus saith the Lord, Israel is my son, even my first-born. And I say unto thee, Let my son go, that he may serve me." The children of Israel were God's chosen people, dear to him, and his special care, above all people of the earth. Israel, therefore, is called his son. We see a like style in some other texts. Jer. xxxi. 9: "For I am a father unto Israel. And Ephraim is my first-

born." Hosea xi. 1: "When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt."

And Christians, who believe in Jesus, and through him are brought nigh to God, are God's children and sons. John i. 12: "As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name." 1 John iii. 1: "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God." Gal. iii. 26: "Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus." But Jesus is "the Son of God" by way of eminence. He is "the first born among many brethren." Rom. viii. 29.

How Jesus is the Son of God, has been shewn formerly.\* I rehearse here briefly only. He is the Son of God, as he was born of a virgin, by the immediate and extraordinary interposition of the Divine power. He is the Son of God, as he had the spirit without measure, and the Father's fulness was poured out upon him, or the Deity dwelt in him. And he was afterwards declared to be the Son of God by his resurrection from the dead on the third day. He is the first begotten from the dead, who died and rose again, and dies no more, but lives for ever. And he is exalted to God's right hand, being invested with authority and dominion over all flesh, and constituted judge of the world, by whom God will pass sentence upon all mankind.

See Sermon III.—*On the Son of God.* Works, Vol. X. pp. 385, 390.

In these respects, as well as others, he has the pre-eminence. See Col. i. 15—19.

It may be here inquired, if Jesus were a man, with a human soul and body, how could he know all things? And how could he work so many miracles? The answer is to this purpose: *God was with him*; and the Father, in him, did the works. The disciples, as is allowed, during the whole time of our Lord's abode with them here on earth, conceived of him no otherwise, than as a man, or the great prophet that was to come into the world, the Christ, who had the words of eternal life, or made the fullest revelation of the Divine mind. They believed him to be a man, and yet they were persuaded that *he knew what was in man*. Yea, our Lord himself, after he had given sufficient proofs that he was the promised Messiah, expected, and judged it reasonable, that every pious and understanding Jew should believe him able to perform miraculous works upon persons at a distance, without his going to them. See John iv. 46—50. And some had that faith; though, undoubtedly, they esteemed him to be only a prophet, or a man highly favoured of God.

And though there are none of the prophets, not Moses himself, upon whom the spirit of God did abide, as upon Jesus the Messiah; yet there are divers things in the Old Testament that might assist pious and attentive Jews, in our Lord's time, in forming just conceptions concerning the knowledge as well as the power of the Messiah.

The prophet Elisha could tell the king of Israel exactly the designs and counsels of the king of

Syria. See 2 Kings vi. 8—12, and 2 Kings v. 25, 26. When Elisha asked Gehazi, "Whence comest thou? and he said, Thy servant went no whither; Elisha said unto him, Went not my spirit with thee, when the man turned again in his chariot to meet thee?" He had seen and heard all that transaction, as if he had been present.

It was indeed a wonderful knowledge that was given that prophet; but it may be perceived, that by divine communication he might have known much more.

In like manner, in the perfectly innocent and capacious mind of the blessed Jesus, who had "the spirit without measure," it is easy to suppose that there was, and must have been, an extensive and intimate knowledge of things distant and secret.

And some of Elisha's miracles were wrought at a distance. He did not see Naaman, whose leprosy was cured at his word, or by his direction. 2 Kings v. 9—12. Nor was he present with the widow when her oil was multiplied. 2 Kings iv. 4—7.

To proceed. By *the Spirit*, or *Holy Ghost*, the persons in this way of thinking do not understand a distinct intelligent agent, or being of great power and capacity. But with them the Spirit of God is God himself, or the power of God, or a gift, or divine influence and manifestation.

Ps. xxxiii. 6. "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth," or the spirit of his mouth. The word of the Lord and the breath of his mouth are one and the same. All things came into being

and were disposed of by his will, at his word and command.

In like manner Job xxvii. 13. "By his spirit he has garnished the heavens. His hand has formed the crooked serpent:" or the winding constellation in the heavens, which we call the Milky Way. The *spirit*, or *the hand*, of God formed all those things.

Luke xi. 20. "If I by the finger of God cast out demons, no doubt the kingdom of God is come unto you." In Matt. xii. 28, "But if I cast out demons by the spirit of God, then is the kingdom of God come unto you." So *the finger of God*, or *spirit of God*, is the power of God, or God himself. As St. Peter says, Acts ii. 22, "Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved among you by miracles, which God did by him in the midst of you."

So in other places, likewise, the spirit of God is the same as God; as the spirit of a man is the man himself. 1 Cor. ii. 11: "What man knoweth the things of a man, but the spirit of man, which is in him? Even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the spirit of God." Gal. vi. 18: "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit," that is, with you: as at the conclusion of several other epistles, particularly 1 Cor. xvi. 23: "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you."

In the Acts of the Apostles the Spirit often denotes a gift, or power. Acts ii. 38: "Repent and be baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost: *την δωρεαν τε αγιου πνευματος*. Acts viii. 20. Simon of Samaria "thought that the gift of God might be

purchased with money :” *την δωρεαν τε Θεου.* Acts. x. 45 : “ On the Gentiles was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost :” *ἡ δωρεα τε ἁγίου πνευματος.*

Timothy is directed, 1 Tim. iv. 14 : “ Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy :” *Μη ἀμελει τε εν σοι χαρισματος.* 2 Tim. i. 6 : “ Stir up the gift of God which is in thee :” *αναζωπυρειν το χαρισμα τε Θεου.*

When God said to Moses, Numb. xi. 16, 17, “ that he should go and gather unto him seventy men of the Elders of Israel, and,” says he, “ I will take of the spirit that is in thee, and will put it upon them ;” no one understands thereby, that God intended to take from Moses a portion of a spiritual being resting upon him ; but that he would bestow upon those Elders qualifications of wisdom and understanding resembling those in Moses, by which he was so eminent and distinguished. So Deut. xxxiv. 9 : “ Joshua, the son of Nun, was full of the spirit of wisdom. For Moses had laid his hands upon him.”

Zach. xii. 10. “ And I will pour out upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and supplication :” not pour out upon them a great and transcendent being or spirit, but give them the temper, the qualification, the disposition of grace and supplication.

And it is generally supposed that the ancient Jewish people never had any notion of the distinct personality of the spirit, *or the spirit of God*, or *the spirit of the Lord*, though such phrases occur very frequently in the scriptures of the Old Testament.

But they understood these expressions after the manner just shewn.

And it is observable, that in the New Testament, though there are many doxologies, or ascriptions of glory, to God and to Christ, there is not one to the Spirit. Nor is there at the beginning of the epistles any wish of peace from the Spirit distinctly, but only from God the Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ.

Our Lord says, Matt. xxviii. 19, "Go ye, therefore, and teach or disciple all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost." These persons think it not likely, that our Lord should insert in a baptismal form a sublime, mysterious doctrine, not clearly taught any where else. The genuine meaning they suppose to be,\* that men should be baptized into the profession of the belief, and an obligation of obedience to the doctrine, taught by Christ, with authority from God the Father, confirmed by the Holy Ghost: by the Holy Ghost understanding the miracles of our Saviour's own ministry, and of his Apostles, and the spiritual gifts bestowed upon the Apostles and other believers after our Lord's resurrection, and all the wonderful attestations to the truth and divine original of the doctrine taught by Jesus Christ. In

\* Dr. S. Clarke's paraphrase is this:—"Baptizing them with water, *in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost*: that is, receiving them to a profession of the belief, and an obligation to the practice, of that religion which God the Father has revealed and taught by the Son, and confirmed and established by the Holy Ghost."

a word, men were to be baptized into a profession of the Christian religion, and an obligation to act according to it.

And that this is the meaning of this direction of our Lord's, may be inferred from the Acts of the Apostles, where this form, in these very words, never appears ; but men are required to *be baptized in the name of Christ*, or are said to *have been baptized into Christ* : that is, as before observed, they made a profession of faith in Jesus, or owned their obligation to obey him, in being baptized. Acts ii. 38. "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ." Chap. viii. 16. "Only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus." See chap. viii. 35—38. Rom. vi. 3. "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into his death?" Gal. iii. 27. "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ."

Of those who are in this scheme it is to be observed, finally, that they admit not any real Trinity, or Trinity of Divine Persons, either equal or subordinate. But to them there is one God, even the Father, and one Lord, even Jesus Christ, who had, when on earth, the spirit without measure, and also poured out of the spirit, or spiritual and miraculous gifts, in abundance upon his Apostles, and others his followers, and is exalted to dominion and power over all things, to the glory of God, and for the good of the church.

This is, in brief, that scheme, which is called Unitarian. I should now apply it to the text before



us ; but that must be deferred to another opportunity. I shall now mention only an observation or two, partly doctrinal, partly practical.

1. The scheme now represented, seems to be the plainest and most simple scheme of all. And it is generally allowed to have been the belief of the Nazarean Christians, or Jewish believers.

But whatever may be the simplicity of this scheme, even they who have seemed to receive it, in the main, have corrupted it, and suffered themselves to be entangled in philosophical schemes and speculations, about the pre-existence of the soul of Christ and other matters.

Indeed, the Christian religion has in it great simplicity, both as to doctrines and positive institutions. But men have not delighted to retain the simplicity of either.

2. Whatever speculative scheme of doctrine we receive as true, we are to see that we do not too much rely upon our sound faith, or right sentiment, but proceed to, and chiefly charge ourselves with, a suitable practice. James ii. 19. "Thou believest that there is one God. Thou doest well. The demons believe and tremble." James writes especially to Jewish, not Gentile believers. And it is likely, that they, as well as other Jews at that time, prided themselves in their orthodoxy, or right faith, concerning the Deity. The Divine Unity was with them a favourite article. He therefore singles out that ; and tells them, that they might hold that right faith, and yet be never the better for it. If they should rely upon that faith, without good works,

that very faith would prove an aggravation of their misery.

Truth in things of religion is not a matter of indifference. Every virtuous mind must be desirous to know it. But no speculative belief, without practice, is saving, or will give a man real worth and excellence. The knowledge that puffeth up, is vain and insignificant. To knowledge there should be added humility : gratitude to God, who has afforded us means and opportunities of knowledge : a modest sense of our remaining ignorance and imperfection : a diffidence, and apprehensiveness, that though we see some things with great evidence, and are firmly persuaded of their truth, nevertheless many of our judgments of things may be false and erroneous.

We should likewise be cautious of judging others. Some who have less knowledge, may have more virtue. God alone knows the hearts of men, and all their circumstances : and is therefore the only judge what errors are criminal, and how far men fall short of improving the advantages afforded them, or act up to the light that has been given them.

Let us then inquire with care and impartiality. Let us profess the truth so far as we are acquainted with it, and candidly recommend it to others, with mildness, patience, and long-suffering : and in all things act sincerely according to the light we have ; that none of us may fail of that full reward which God, the best of beings, offers to us, and invites us to contend for, and accept : and will through Jesus Christ certainly bestow upon all who diligently improve the privileges which they have been favoured with in their state of trial.

## DISCOURSE IV.

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PHILIPP. ii. 5—9 :

*Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.*  
And what follows.

I HAVE proposed to consider this text distinctly. In so doing I have represented the different opinions of Christians concerning the Deity and the person of Jesus Christ.

The opinion last represented, was that called Unitarian and Nazarean. I am now to apply that doctrine to this text, or interpret this text according to the sentiments of those who believe Jesus to be a man, with a human soul and human body : but *a man with whom God was*, in a most peculiar and extraordinary manner.

“ Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus ; who being in the form of God.”

They who are in the scheme which we are now explaining suppose, that here, in this world, Jesus was in the form of God. What the Apostle intends thereby is the wonderful knowledge which the Lord Jesus shewed, even of things at a distance, things past, and the thoughts and reasonings and surmises of men : of all which we have in the gospels a most

beautiful and affecting history\* :—when at his word and command the most infirm and diseased persons were immediately healed ; when those who had the palsy, or the dropsy, or were lunatic, were healed of their diseases ; when the blind received their sight, the lame walked, the deaf were made to hear, and the dumb to speak ; when he took upon him some special appearance of authority, and to such as had the leprosy, and petitioned for a cure, he said, *I will, Be thou clean* ;—when he fed and refreshed several thousands at once in desert places ; when he directed Peter to cast a hook into the sea, assuring him of a supply for himself and of the tribute money for the temple ; when he raised the dead, and walked on the sea, and with a word composed the winds and the waves ; when he conveyed to his disciples, upon his sending them from him, spiritual gifts, so far as was requisite, at that season. And though that was not yet accomplished, it was plainly declared, by his Fore-runner, that this was he who should baptize men with the Holy Ghost, or bestow, on a sudden, in a plentiful measure, wisdom and understanding, and miraculous powers, upon his followers in general, according to their several stations.

This may be well meant by *the form of God*, These things explain the Apostle's expression in the text. And this wonderful power and knowledge

\* *Μορφη* in nostris libris non significat internum et occultum aliquid, sed id quod in oculos incurrit, qualis erat eximia in Christo potestas sanandi morbos omnes, ejiciendi dæmonas, excitandi mortuos, mutandi rerum naturas. *Grot. ad Philipp.* ii. 6.

seem to be what the same Apostle means, when he says, that Christ was rich, in 2 Cor. viii. 9 ; which place may be reckoned parallel with that which we are now considering. " For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ : that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich."

" Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God," that is, did not earnestly covet divine honour from men, or seek to be equal, or like to God : " but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being in the likeness of ordinary men." That is, very probably, the Apostle's design. There begins the account of Christ's condescending and self-denying conduct. Whatever\* scheme men embrace concerning the Deity and the person of Christ, I think they must allow of this interpretation ; either, that Jesus did not make a show of his divinity, but veiled it, and hid it ; or, that he did not earnestly seek to be, or appear equal, or like to God.

By not earnestly coveting divine honour, or seeking to be equal, or like to God, St. Paul may refer to and intend many things in the course of our Lord's ministry, which are recorded in the gospels. Our Lord did not act as if he was independent. He declared, that he came from God, and that the Father had sent him. He professed to teach, and act, as he had received from the Father. When

\* See the Credibility of the Gospel History. Vol. III. pp. 398, 399, and Vol. IV. pp. 814, &c.

some would have persuaded him to assume kingly power and authority, not doubting but he was able to set up a government, to which all might be compelled to submit; he absolutely declined the proposal. He first defeated the measures which they had taken to bring him into their design; and afterwards he sharply reprov'd that worldly-mindedness by which they had been actuated.

For a like reason he enjoined silence upon some, on whom he had wrought great cures.

Mark x. 17, 18. "When he was gone forth into the way, there came one running, and kneeled to him, and asked him, Good Master, what shall I do, that I may inherit eternal life? And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? There is none good but one; that is God." The outward respect shewn by that person being so extraordinary, both as to action and expression, he could not accept it, without an intimation of the supreme respect due to God alone.

John v. 30. "I can of mine ownself do nothing. As I hear, I judge. And my judgment is just, because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me."

John x. 30—38. Our Lord having in some strong expressions represented the high authority given to him, the "Jews took up stones to stone him. And said, For a good work we stone thee not, but for blasphemy, and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God." Whereupon our Lord modestly answers, agreeably to what he had before said, that the near relation to God, spoken of by

him, was claimed on no other account, than the high honour which God had conferred upon him, and which they might discern from the works which they had seen him do. "If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken; say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent [into the world, Thou blasphemest, because I said, I am the Son of God? If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works."

And many other particulars must occur to the thoughts of all; wherein our Lord did not choose his own will, nor affect independence, but referred all to God the Father.

"But made himself of no reputation." Literally, according to the original, emptied himself. That is, he did not exert the divine power residing in him, for securing to himself plentiful accommodations, honourable respects, and humble, lowly obeisance; but he lived in mean circumstances, and was exposed to the remarks, reproaches, and ill usage, of many.

"And took upon him the form of a servant." But, according to the original, it is more literally "taking the form of a servant. He emptied himself, or made himself of no reputation, taking the form of a servant." This farther illustrates the foregoing particular. Jesus did not place himself in servitude to any. But, as he says to the disciples, "Whether is greater, he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth? But I am among you, as

one that serveth," Luke xxii. 27. Instead of assuming state and grandeur, or a continued appearance of greatness, he was like a man of mean condition. He conversed freely with all sorts of men, and admitted all to free access, and allowed of questions and cavils. Himself went about doing good, travelling over the cities and villages of the land of Israel, teaching the doctrine of the kingdom of heaven; not inviting men by the pomp of numerous attendants, or by gifts, or promises of worldly advantages; but receiving usually needful supplies for himself and his disciples from a few grateful followers, who ministered to him of their substance.

In the whole of his ministry, he usually acted as one that serves. But there were some remarkable instances of humility and condescension, particularly when he washed the disciples' feet, and gave them the refreshment ordinarily received from servants only.

Some think, that when our Lord "emptied himself, or made himself of no reputation," he was no longer "in the form of God." But it seems to me, that he was at the same time "in the form of God," and in the "form of a servant." He had the "form of God" in this world, as he wrought miracles of all kinds, whenever he pleased, and likewise had all knowledge, of all things. At the same time he acted very humbly and meekly, and was destitute of external pomp and grandeur.

And I think our Lord's discourse with his disciples presently after the forementioned remarkable condescension, shews, that the "form of God and



the form of a servant" were united. John xiii. 12—14: "So then after he had washed their feet, and had taken his garments, and was set down again, he said unto them, Know ye what I have done unto you? Ye call me Master and Lord. And so I am. If I, then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done unto you." He was their Lord and Master at the same time that he acted in divers respects as one that serves.

A nobleman, or other person of great distinction for wisdom and capacity, with a high commission under his Prince, may upon some occasion, and for important reasons, condescend greatly, or empty himself, by performing offices more generally done by men of low and mean condition. Still he has the authority belonging to his commission, and the dignity that is inherent in his character, as a man of honour, veracity, and experience.

"And was made in the likeness of men;" or, more literally and properly, according to the original, "and being made in the likeness of men;" or, being in the likeness of men; that is, being like an ordinary man, when he was not such. For he was innocent and perfect, and the fulness of the Deity dwelt in him. St. Paul does not intend to intimate, that our Saviour was not really a man, but that he appeared like an ordinary man, when he was really more. So Rom. viii. 3: "God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh." He was really a man, but had only the likeness of sinful

men ; for he was innocent, and perfect, and was not liable to the sentence of death, or the common law of mortality binding other men.

Ver. 8. “ And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.” And being found in his outward appearance as another ordinary man, he humbled himself so far, as to yield up himself to death. He made no resistance. He exerted not any of that extraordinary power, or knowledge, with which he was endowed, to defeat the malicious designs of his unreasonable enemies, but quietly resigned himself, in obedience to God, to death, the death of the cross. He could stoop no lower. So far he submitted, and acquiesced, as all know from our Lord’s history in the gospels ; where are candidly related at large the reproachful, disgraceful, aggravating circumstances of the painful death which Jesus underwent.

Ver. 9—11. “ Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him.” On account of that excellent and useful service, that cheerful condescension, and willing obedience, in patiently enduring so painful and ignominious a death, for promoting the great ends designed by the Divine wisdom, God has highly exalted him, far beyond whatever any one else has obtained.

Christ’s exaltation began with his resurrection from the dead on the third day, without seeing corruption ; after which, he ascended to heaven, and was seated in the divine presence, next to God the Father.

“And given him a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow;” that is, that all intelligent beings may shew respect to Jesus; “of things in heaven,” angels, “and things on earth,” men, “and things under the earth,” evil spirits, or men departed, when they shall by him be raised up; “and that every tongue should confess,” particularly that men of all nations and languages on this earth should acknowledge, “that Jesus Christ is Lord,” and honour and serve him “to the glory of God the Father.”

Christ’s exaltation is “to the glory of God.” God has exalted and appointed him to be Lord, for his own glory. For the exaltation of Jesus is indeed a great display of the wisdom, equity, and justice, of the Divine Being. It shews his regard for distinguished and eminent virtue. So extraordinary services and sufferings, and such patience under them, were entitled to special notice. God has conferred on Jesus a reward, greater than could have been devised by man, and highly becoming his Majesty to confer upon him to whom he had given so important a commission, for the benefit of the human race, and who had executed it with unparalleled faithfulness, zeal, and alacrity, though exceeding painful and difficult.

The glory of Jesus is in another respect to the glory of the Father, inasmuch as that exaltation is a great confirmation of the truth of his doctrine, and must contribute mightily to animate his Apostles and others in spreading his doctrine, notwithstanding many difficulties; and it would contribute to bring

men to faith in Jesus, as the Christ, and to repentance toward God, and every branch of true holiness, and to eminence therein, and to the practice of meekness, resignation, zeal, courage, and the virtues of every condition, whether prosperous or adverse.

That is what the Apostle says of Christ's exaltation,—which is often spoken of in the New Testament, and differently described, but with constant harmony upon the whole. I shall recite some places.

Our Lord himself said to his disciples, before he finally departed from them, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." Matt. xxviii. 18. And says St. Peter, soon after our Lord's ascension, Acts ii. 31, "This Jesus hath God raised up. Whereof we all are witnesses." Ver. 36. "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ." See also chap. v. 30—32. And at the house of Cornelius at Cæsarea, chap. x. 40, 42: "Him God raised up the third day. And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify, that it is he which is ordained of God to be the judge of the quick and the dead." Compare this with St. Paul's discourse at Athens, Acts xvii. 30, 31. And says the same Apostle, Ephes. i. 18—22, "That ye may know the exceeding greatness of his power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and

dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come. And has put all things under his feet, and gave him [to be] the head over all things to the church."

Having explained this text according to the last-mentioned scheme, I shall now conclude with some remarks and observations.

1. Christians ought to shew moderation, and carefully maintain love and friendship with one another, notwithstanding difference of opinion about divers matters.

They should not be willing to unchristianize and anathematize any man who professes to believe Jesus to be the Christ, and to hold him for the head of the church, and Lord and Master of it.

They should not be unwilling to hold communion one with another. If they cannot do that, they should not deny to others the character of integrity, much less admit a thought of incommoding them in their worldly interests upon account of some difference of opinion; for that is doing so as they would not be done unto. And by the practice of force and compulsion, when they are in power, they encourage others, of different sentiments from them, when in power, to act in like manner. And according to this way of thinking and acting, oppression and tyranny must prevail every where, and Christian people must be always at variance, devouring one another.

There always has been difference of opinion among men. There were divers sects of philosophy, before the rise of Christianity. Where there is but

one opinion, there is absolute tyranny without liberty; or there is total indifference about the things of religion, without thought and inquiry.

Where Christianity is professed, if there is any freedom, the importance of the doctrine will excite thought and consideration. Thence will proceed variety of opinion, unless men's minds were quite alike; which they are not. Nor have all men the like helps and advantages. For which reasons it is not to be expected, that all should see things in the same light.

Though Christians are divided in their sentiments about a Trinity and the person of Christ, and some other points, yet there are many things in which they agree. They all profess to receive the Scriptures as the word of God, and the rule of their faith. And there are divers things which may be easily learned from scripture, in which therefore they ought to agree.

We are there taught to think of God as one. "Thou shalt have no other gods before me," was proclaimed by God to the Jewish people in the most solemn manner. Indeed all Christians in general agree in this, that there is but one God—however they may seem to each other at times to multiply deities. Certainly the unity of God is a principle which we ought to maintain whole and uncorrupted in all its simplicity.

We are likewise to conceive of this one God as eternal, all perfect, the Creator of the heavens and the earth, and the governor of the worlds which he has made.

We should think of God as great, and powerful. Else we shall not fear before him at all times ; nor trust in him, in the various trials and occurrences of this life, nor seek to him, and pray to him, as we ought, to approve ourselves to him ; that is, unless we believe him able to hear those who seek to him, and to reward such as diligently serve him.

It is highly expedient that we trace out by reason and scripture the evidences of the divine goodness and mercy, that we may not shun and flee from him as inexorable ; that we may not be discouraged in doing our utmost to please him, though we cannot attain to an absolute and sinless perfection.

When Moses desired to see the *glory of God*, and his request was not rejected, God “ made all his goodness to pass before him,” and proclaimed, “ The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth.” See Exod. xxxiii. and xxxiv.

The inspired Scriptures continually represent God to us as great and amiable.

He is “ of purer eyes than to behold iniquity” in any, with approbation. Heb. i. 13. Yet he accepts the humble and penitent ; and is as ready to forgive and accept those who return from their wanderings, as they who relent and are pierced with a sense of guilt [can wish or desire. Isa. lvii. 15. “ For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is holy,” that is, sacred, great, and august, “ I dwell in the high and holy place ; with him also, who is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive

the spirit of the humble, and the heart of the contrite."

The value and importance of right conceptions concerning these perfections of God may be seen farther shewn in Jer. ix. 23, 24.

These are things in which all men of every rank, learned and unlearned, rich and poor, are more concerned, than in any points of a speculative nature, that are very abstruse and almost unintelligible. The plainest truths are the most important; not the most abstruse and mysterious, as some would persuade men to think. For religion is the concern of all, and the most momentous things ought to be obvious, that none who are not extremely negligent, or wilfully blind, may be unacquainted with them.

And herein is wisdom—to consider God as great; good, and excellent, and to act accordingly, standing in awe of his judgments, studious to gain and keep his favour, by a sincere regard to his holy laws, and doing the things that are well pleasing in his sight.

We are also to believe, that Jesus is the promised Messiah, the Christ, the Son of God, the Saviour of the world: that he acted by a special commission under God the Father, and that the doctrine taught by him may be relied upon, as containing the true way to life.

Christians must believe that Jesus had the innocent infirmities of the human nature; that he really had grief, that he really suffered and died, and rose



again, and is ascended up to heaven. Otherwise they lose all the benefit of his example.

We must remember, that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. For certainly every thing concerning the Lord Jesus Christ was designed for the glory of God, and is actually conducive to it. By his life, doctrine, death, exaltation, and arguments taken from thence, men have been turned from idols to the living and true God.

Jesus, in his person and example, in his life, and in his death, and in his exaltation, is unspeakably amiable. And we ought to give glory and honour to him who died for us, and rose again, and is at the right hand of God. And though we have not seen him, we cannot but love him. Still it is not to be forgotten, that "Jesus is Lord to the glory of God the Father."

There has been in all times occasion for such hints as these. And those Christians are not to be justified, who, instead of praying to the Father in the name of Jesus Christ, address almost all their prayers and praises to Christ, without any warrant from the New Testament, and contrary to express and repeated instructions concerning the object and manner of worship.

One of the reasons why we ought ever to love and honour the Lord Jesus, is, that through him we have been brought unto God, and to the knowledge of his glorious perfections and over-ruling providence. As St. Peter writes, 1 Ep. i. 18—21, "Forasmuch as ye know—that ye were redeemed by the

precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish, and without spot. Who verily was fore-ordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you; who by him do believe in God that raised him from the dead, and gave him glory, that your faith and hope might be in God."

2. The scheme which has been last considered, appears to be the plainest and most simple of all. This was taken notice of formerly, and I do not intend to enlarge farther upon it now.

3. According to this scheme, the condescension and meekness, and other virtues of the Lord Jesus, are the most exemplary, and his exaltation is the most encouraging.

For he is truly of kin to us,\* and a fit example of

\* Heb. ii. 11: "For both he that sanctifieth, and they who are sanctified, are all of one. For which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren." All of one. *Εξ ἑνός ὡσπερ.* "Of one father, that is, God," says Grotius. "Of one original and nature." Whitby. "Of one stock and nature." S. Clarke. "Have all the same origin." Beausobre, who goes on, "all are of one, meaning of Adam. In order to be high priest for men, it was necessary that Jesus Christ should be man. This is what renders him sensible to the sufferings of men: that which disposed him to love and help them, and which put him in a condition whereby he was able to offer up himself a sacrifice for them. See ver. 14, 17, 18, and ch. v. 2, x. 5." "Of one father, Abraham," says Peirce, who also adds in his notes, "This interpretation is confirmed by ver. 16, 17. For he laid not hold of angels, but of the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren; meaning the seed of Abraham." Which makes little difference in the present argument. See before, at p. 39, Note.

faith and patience, and rightly *the captain of our salvation*; whose conduct in circumstances like ours, and under like temptations, is inviting and exemplary. Which is agreeable to divers parts of the Apostle's argument in the epistle to the Hebrews, ch. iv. 14—16. "Let us hold fast our profession; for we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us, therefore, come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." See also chap. ii. 10—18.

Our Lord's exaltation is also, in this way, most encouraging. His condescension and obedience, in acquiescing in his low condition on this earth, and in yielding up himself to death, are set before us as an example to be imitated; and it is added, "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him." This affords reason to think, that if we practise meekness and other virtues, and are obedient to God, and promote the good of our fellow-creatures, we likewise shall be highly exalted and greatly rewarded. But supposing Jesus to have been, before his appearance on this earth, under God, the creator and governor of the world; his glorification after death, will not seem to be so much the reward of his faith and obedience here, as the reinstating him in what he enjoyed, and had a right to, before. Our case then is so different from his, as to have little or no resemblance. And his glorification, or exaltation, if it may be so called, will be little or no excitement to us.

But we should preserve this quickening motive and consideration, the glory and reward of Jesus, in all its force ; which, as it stands in this text, and in many other places of the New Testament, is the most animating thought that can be conceived.

As the Apostle says, Heb. xii. 1, 2, "Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin that doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us ; looking unto Jesus, the captain and perfect example of faith, who, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." And says our exalted Lord to the church of the Laodiceans, "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne." Rev. iii. 21.

And let us particularly remember the moving exhortation in our text. For though, because of the different sentiments of Christians in some points of a speculative nature, this, and some former discourses, have been, in part, controversial, the genuine import and design of the text is throughout practical ; and tends to dispose us, as occasions require, to be ready to promote the good of others, and for that end to strive to out-do each other in meekness and condescension. "If there be any consolation in Christ—fulfil ye my joy.—Let nothing be done through strife, or vain glory, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. Let

that mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus ;” who, though he had such peculiar distinctions on account of his high office and character, did not earnestly covet divine honour from men, nor affect external greatness, pomp, and splendour, power and authority, ease and pleasure ; but emptied himself, and acted as a servant, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. For which reason he has been advanced to extensive dominion and power, and great honour and glory ; in which all others shall share hereafter, who now have a temper and conduct resembling his.

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